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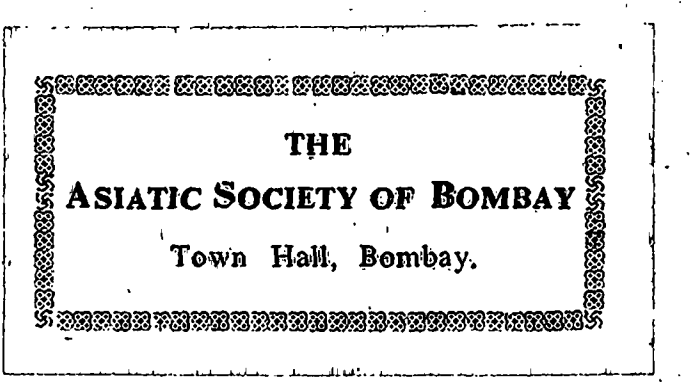

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HISTORY OF EUROPE

DURING THE

FRENCH REVOLUTION.

1789—1815.

"Bellum maxime omnium memorabile quæ unquam gesta sint me scripturum; quod Hannibale duce Carthaginienses cum populo Romano gessere. Nam neque validiores opibus ullæ inter se civitates gentesque contulerunt arma, neque his ipsis tantum unquam virium aut roboris fuit: et haud ignotas belli artes inter se, sed expertas primo Punico conserebant bello; odiis etiam prope majoribus certarunt quam viribus; et adeo varia belli fortuna, anceps que Mars fuit, ut propius periculum fuerint, qui vicerunt."—Liv. *lib.* 21.

HISTORY OF EUROPE

FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE

FRENCH REVOLUTION

IN M.DCC.LXXXIX.

TO THE RESTORATION OF THE BOURBONS

IN M.DCCC.XV.

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BY ARCHIBALD ALISON, F.R.S.E.

ADVOCATE.

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TO

THE REV. ARCHIBALD ALISON, LLB., F.R.S.L.E.,

PREBENDARY OF SARUM, RECTOR OF RODDINGTON,

VICAR OF HIGH ERCALL, ETC. IN THE COUNTY OF SALOP,

AND SENIOR CLERGYMAN OF ST PAUL'S CHAPEL,

EDINBURGH;

AUTHOR OF "ESSAYS ON THE NATURE AND

PRINCIPLES OF TASTE;"

THIS WORK,

FRAMED ON HIS PRINCIPLES,

AND ENCOURAGED BY HIS COUNSEL,

IS INSCRIBED,

WITH THE HIGHEST SENTIMENTS OF RESPECT, AND THE

WARMEST FEELINGS OF FILIAL AFFECTION,

BY THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

In this Edition a great quantity of new matter has been added, principally in relation to the external transactions of Europe during the early years of the Revolution; and a variety of details have been supplied, drawn chiefly from the works which have been published since the First Edition passed through the press. A list of the authors referred to in the whole work is given at the commencement of the first volume, so far as it can as yet be made up, and many errors in the former edition corrected, though, the Author regrets to say, several are still to be found, which have escaped notice, from the printing having been unavoidably carried on at a dis-

tance from his residence. He takes this opportunity of returning his sincere thanks to the Public, for the favourable manner in which they have received this work, and the indulgence which they have manifested towards its many imperfections. The labour consequent on the extraction of materials from so great a variety of authors in different languages, must plead his apology for many of these faults, but for others he has no such excuse to offer; and he can in perfect sincerity affirm, that he has never yet heard a criticism on any part of his composition, of which he did not feel the justice, and from which he does not hope in the concluding volumes to profit.

Possil House,
Lanarkshire, May 8, 1835.

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PREFACE.

THE History of Europe, during the French Revolution, naturally divides itself into four periods:—

The first, commencing with the Convocation of the States-General in 1789, terminates with the execution of Louis, and the establishment of a Republic in France in 1793. This period embraces the history and vast changes of the Constituent Assembly; the annals of the Legislative Assembly; the revolt and overthrow of the throne on the 10th August; the trial and death of the King. It traces the changes of public opinion, and the fervour of innovation, from their joyous commencement to that bloody catastrophe, and the successive steps by which the nation was led from the transports of general philanthropy

to the sombre ascendant of sanguinary ambition.

The second opens with the strife of the Girondists and the Jacobins; and, after recounting the fall of the latter body, enters upon the dreadful era of the Reign of Terror, and follows out the subsequent struggles of the now exhausted factions till the establishment of a regular military government, by the suppression of the revolt of the National Guard of Paris, in October 1795. This period embraces the commencement of the war, the immense efforts of France during the campaign in 1793, the heroic contest in La Vendée, the last efforts of Polish independence under Kosciusko, the conquest of Flanders and Holland, and the scientific manœuvres of the campaign of 1795. But its most interesting part is the internal history of the Revolution; the heart-rending sufferings of persecuted virtue; and the means by which Providence caused the guilt of the Revolutionists to work out their own deserved and memorable punishment.

The third, commencing with the rise of Napoleon, terminates with the seizure of the

reins of power by that extraordinary man, and the first pause in the general strife by the Peace of Amiens. It is singularly rich in splendid achievements, embracing the Italian campaigns of the French hero, and the German ones of the Archduke Charles; the battles of St Vincent, Camperdown, and the Nile; the expedition to Egypt, the wars of Suwarrow in Italy, and Massena on the Alps; the campaigns of Marengo and Hohenlinden; the Northern Coalition, with its dissolution by the victory of Copenhagen; the conquests of the English in India, and the expulsion of the French from Egypt. During this period, the democratic passions of France had exhausted themselves, and the nation groaned under a weak but relentless military despotism, whose external disasters and internal severities prepared all classes to range themselves round the banners of a victorious chieftain.

The fourth opens with brighter auspices to France, under the firm and able government of Napoleon, and terminates with his fall in 1815. Less illustrated than the former period by his military genius, it was rendered still more memorable by his resistless power and

mighty achievements. It embraces the campaigns of Austerlitz, Jena, and Friedland; the destruction of the French navy at Trafalgar; the rise of the desperate struggle in Spain; and the gallant, though abortive, efforts of Austria in 1809; the degradation and extinction of the Papal authority, the slow but steady growth of the English military power in the Peninsula, and the splendid career of Wellington; the general suffering under the despotism of France, the memorable invasion of Russia, the convulsive efforts of Germany in 1813, the last campaign of Napoleon, the capture of Paris, and his final overthrow at Waterloo.

The two first periods illustrate the consequences of democratic ascendency upon the civil condition; the two last their effect upon the military struggles and external relations of nations. In both, the operation of the same law of nature may be discerned, for the expulsion of a destructive passion from the frame of society, by the efforts which it makes for its own gratification; in both, the principal actors were overruled by an unseen power, which rendered their vices and ambition the

means of ultimately effecting the deliverance of mankind. Generations perished during the vast transition, but the law of nature was unceasing in its operation; and the same principle which drove the government of Robespierre through the Reign of Terror to the 9th of Thermidor, impelled Napoleon to the snows of Russia and the rout of Waterloo.* The illustrations of this moral law compose the great lesson to be learned from the eventful scenes of this mighty drama.

The two first periods form the subject of these volumes. The two last will be embraced in those which are to follow.

A subject so splendid in itself, so full of political and military instruction, replete with such great and heroic actions, adorned by so many virtues, and darkened by so many crimes, never yet fell to the lot of an historian. During the twenty-five years of its progress, the world has gone through more than five hundred years of ordinary existence; and the annals of Modern Europe will be sought in

* "Les Hommes agitent," says Bossuet, "mais Dieu les mene."

vain for a parallel to that brief period of anxious effort and chequered achievement.

Although so short a time has elapsed since the termination of these events, the materials which have been collected for their elucidation have already become, beyond all precedent, interesting and ample. The great and varied ability which, since the general peace, has been brought to bear upon political and historical subjects in France, has produced, besides many regular Histories of extraordinary talent, a crowd of Memoirs of various authority, but throwing, upon the whole, the fullest light on the manners, feelings, and sufferings of those troubled times.* On the one hand, the faithful and impartial Narrative of M. Toulangeon, with the profound works of Mignet and Thiers, have done ample justice to the Republican side; while, on the other, the elaborate Histories of Lacretelle and La-

* The previous state of France, with the moral, political, and financial causes which brought about the Revolution, are fully developed in the able works of Rivarol, Neckar, and Madame de Staël, and the luminous financial statements of Calonne, Neckar, and Arthur Young. Nor are the materials for the history of the convulsion itself less abundant.

Baume, with the detached Narratives of Chateaubriand, Beauchamps, and Bertrand de Molleville, have fully illustrated the sufferings of the Royalists during the progress of the Revolution. The singular and interesting events of Poland are fully detailed in the able Narrative of Rulhiere, and the eloquent pages of Salvandy. But the most interesting record of those times is to be found in the contemporary Memoirs by the principal sufferers during their continuance, the best of which are to be met with in the great collection published at Paris of Revolutionary Memoirs, extending to fifty-six volumes, and embracing, among other authentic narratives, those of Bailly, Rivarol, Riouffe, Barbaroux, Buzot, Condorcet, Madame Campan, Madame Roland, Madame Larochejaquelein, Clery, Hue, Carnot, Sapinaud, Thureau, Bonchamps, Doppet, Abbé Guillon, Abbé Morellet, Count Ségur, General Kleber, M. Puisaye, and many others.* For the me-

* In the graphic History of the Convention, too, recently published at Paris, many vivid and striking pictures are to be found, evidently drawn from life; while the admirable sketches of Dumont and Mounier convey the most faithful idea of the early leaders of the Assembly, and the singular Memoirs of Levasseur de la Sarthe furnish a portrait the extreme point of Jacobin extravagance.

morable period of the Consulate, and the character of the illustrious men who were assembled round the throne of Napoleon, the Mémoirs of Thibaudeau, General Rapp, Bourrienne, Savary, Gohier, and the Duchess of Abrantes, have furnished an inexhaustible mine of information, the authenticity of which may in general be judged of with tolerable accuracy, by comparing these different Narratives together.

In military annals the materials are still more ample. The great scientific History of General Jomini, in sixteen volumes, with the lucid Narratives of Marshal Jourdan, Marshal St Cyr, and General Dumourier, leave nothing to be desired for the earlier years of the war; while the genius of Napoleon, as conspicuous in his Memoirs as his Victories, throws a clear light over the Italian Campaigns, and renders it only a matter of regret, that his fidelity as a historian was not equal to his ability as an annalist. The eloquent and graphic Narrative of General Mathieu Dumas, in eighteen volumes, commencing with the first appearance of Suwarrow in Italy, goes through the whole subsequent German Campaigns of Na-

poleon; the Histories of Berthier and Regnier, with the Memoirs of Miot, and the Narrative of Sir Robert Wilson, illustrate the brilliant episode of the Egyptian expedition; while on the side of the Allies the works of the Archduke Charles bear as high a character for truth and integrity as military ability; the eloquent History of M. Botta makes us acquainted with the melancholy catalogue of Italian sufferings; and the Memoirs and Histories of the Prussian writers* supply all that was wanting to complete their side of the picture.

For the history of the empire, no works exist of equal ability or authority as those regarding the Revolution; but in many detached publications, the principal facts of importance are to be found. M. Bignon, to whom Napoleon bequeathed, with a large legacy, the duty of compiling the history of his diplomacy, has executed the task, as far at least as 1805, with much ability, though a jaundiced and partial view of Great Britain is to be

* Especially Prince Hardenberg, in his highly interesting and curious "Mémoires d'un Homme d'Etat," with the brilliant Sketch by Sir Robert Wilson, of the Polish campaign in 1807.

discerned in all his pages. M. Norvins, in an animated and popular narrative, has comprised the most picturesque events of the Imperial history, while the Abbé Montgaillard, in his elaborate history, in twelve volumes, with equal prejudice on the other side, has accumulated many facts necessary to be understood for a right understanding of the Imperial Government. The negotiations with the Court of Rome are to be found recorded in the collections regarding the Italian Transactions, in four volumes, by Schorll, the able work on the Concordates by the Abbé du Pradt, and the interesting Memoirs of Cardinal Pacca, while the chief diplomatic papers of the period are collected in the great works of Martini, and Koch, and Schorll, in twelve volumes. In the Biographie Universelle, also edited by M. Michaud, in fifty-two volumes, many interesting particulars regarding the chief characters during the Revolution and the empire are to be found scattered amidst a profusion of other and varied information. The military events of the campaign of 1809 in Germany, are ably recorded in the work of General Pillet, while the interesting Life of

Hofer, by Bartholdy, and the brilliant sketch of the war in Tyrol, by Forster, convey as vivid pictures of the astonishing efforts of the inhabitants of that romantic region.*

As the contest advanced, and Great Britain was drawn as a principal into the continental war, the materials for a general history became still more ample. Mr Southey's incomparable Life of Nelson contains all that England could desire to have recorded of her naval hero, while his History of the Peninsular War exhibits a heart-stirring narrative of that memorable struggle. But with the glories of Wellington's Campaigns the name of Colonel Napier is indissolubly united: and his glowing pages, and scientific reflections, render it only an object of regret, that political feelings should sometimes have tinged with undue bias his otherwise impartial military relation. If any thing were wanting to complete the picture, it would be found in the animated Narratives of Lord Londonderry, Colonel Jones, Mr Gleig, Captain Hamilton, and Captain Scherer, whose works exhibit a succession of sketches

* Geschite Andreas Hofer und Beitrage zur Neucren Kriegsgeschite, von Fredrich Forster. Berlin, 1816.

so vivid, and yet so faithful, that the historian must be insensible, indeed, who does not partake, in some degree, of their enthusiasm.

The French side of the Peninsular War has not been so fully illustrated as their other and more successful campaigns; but the general and impartial Narrative of General Jomini, with the detached works of General Foy, Count Thiebault, M. Rocca, Marshal St Cyr, and Marshal Suchet, throw a clear light over part at least of those complicated events.

For the memorable occurrences of the Russian Campaign, the eloquent and pictured pages of Count Ségur, Baron Fain, and La Baume, corrected by the details of General Gourgaud, the scientific sketch of General Jomini,* and the luminous and impartial Russian Narrative of Colonel Boutourlin, furnish ample materials. The Campaign of 1813, in Germany, has been equally illustrated by the pens of La Baume, Generals Muffling, Gneisenau, and Bulow; Baron Odeleben, Colonel Boutourlin, Baron Fain, and Lord Londonderry; while to the last and greatest Cam-

* In his Life of Napoleon, a work of extraordinary ability and most impartial observation.

paign of Napoleon, the vivid descriptions of Beauchamps, La Baume, and the able Narratives of Jomini and Baron Fain, have done ample justice. For the subsequent and proudest year of England's achievements, the various accounts of the Battle of Waterloo by Generals Gourgaud, Grouchier, and others, over which the gifted mind of Sir Walter Scott has thrown the light of his genius, furnish inexhaustible resources, and close the work with a ray of glory, to which there is nothing comparable in her long and illustrious annals.

In the description of the theatre of these great events, the author, when he does not quote authority, has in general proceeded on his own observation. This is particularly the case with the fields of Marengo, Novi, Arcola, Rivoli, Lodi, the Brenta, the Trebia, the Tagliamento, Zurich, Ulm, Echmuhl, Hohenlinden, Salzburg, Jena, Austerlitz, Aspern, Wagram, Dresden, Leipsic, the Katzbach, Hanau, Laon, Brienne, Craonne, Soissons, Paris, and Waterloo, the passage of the St Bernard, the St Gothard, and the Splugen; and in general the seat of war in 1796 and 1797, in the Alps, of Savoy, Switzerland, Ty-

rol, and Styria, the theatre of Napoleon's and Suwarrow's campaigns in Italy, those of the Archduke Charles in Germany, the memorable struggle of the Tyrolese in 1809, and of Napoleon's last efforts in the north of Germany and France. He has not deemed it advisable to accompany the work with Maps, as that renders it inaccessible to the generality of readers; but those who are not familiar with the places referred to, will frequently find such a reference of great service.

Every one who investigates the events of this period, must be struck with the great inferiority, generally speaking, of the English historians who treat of the same subject. Till the era of the Peninsular War, when a cluster of gifted spirits arose, there are no writers on English affairs at all comparable to the great historical authors on the Continent. In this dearth of native genius applied to this subject, it is fortunate that a connected narrative of events of varied ability, but continued interest and extensive information, is to be found in the Annual Register; that the life of Mr Pitt by Gifford embodies with discriminating talent all the views of that great statesman; and his

biography by Tomline leads the reader only to regret that it should terminate at the most eventful period of his administration; while the Parliamentary Debates through the whole period, edited by Cobbett and Hansard, not only contain most of the statistical details of value to the historian, but all the arguments urged, both in the Legislature and elsewhere, for and against the measures of Government.

An invaluable mass of statistical information for the whole period is to be found in the Parliamentary Reports, compiled with so much care by the Committees of both Houses of Parliament; and admirably digested in the able works of Moreau and Pebrer, as well as the elaborate official compilations of Porter; while, for the details of our Naval forces and successes, ample materials are to be found in the minute and elaborate work of Mr James.

While justice requires, however, that this general praise should be bestowed on the Continental writers who have treated of this period, there is one particular which it is impossible to pass over without an expression of a different kind. Of whatever party, nation, or shade of opinion, they seem all at bottom im-

bued with a profound hatred at this country, and, in consequence, they generally ascribe to the British Cabinet a dark or Machiavelian policy, in matters where it is well known to every person in England, and will be obvious to posterity, they were regulated by very different motives, and often proceeded, from inexperience of warlike measures, without any fixed principle at all. The existence of so general and unfounded a prejudice in so many authors of such great and varied ability, would be inexplicable, if we did not reflect on the splendid post which England occupied throughout the whole struggle, and recollect, that in nations equally as individuals, the conferring of obligations too often engenders no other feeling but that of antipathy; that no compliment is so flattering, because none is so sincere as the vituperation of an adversary who has been inspired with dread; and that though the successful party in a strife is always secretly flattered by the praises bestowed on his antagonists, it is too much to expect of human magnanimity a similar feeling in those to whom fortune has proved adverse.

The events of this period, especially during

the earlier years of the Revolution, are so extensive and complicated, that the only way in which it appeared possible to give a clear narrative was to treat in separate chapters of the civil and military transactions, and in many cases to break into different ones the events of a single campaign. In this way, the order of chronology has not in every instance been strictly followed; and the same events required to be sometimes mentioned twice over, once as affecting the civil history of the times, and again as forming part of the military transactions. This inconvenience, however, was unavoidable, and is a trifling disadvantage, compared to the benefit arising from following out a certain set of events, without interruption, to their termination.

In treating of a subject of such extent, embracing so great a variety of events, and involving almost all the points now in dispute between the two great parties who divide the world, it appeared advisable to the author, with a view both to impartiality and historical fidelity, to adopt two rules, which have been faithfully adhered to throughout the whole work.

The first of these was to give on every occasion the authorities by volume and page, from which the statement in the text was taken. This has been carried to an unusual, some may think an unnecessary length, as not only are the authorities for every paragraph invariably given, but in many instances also those for every sentence have been accumulated on the margin. This appeared indispensable in treating of subjects on which men are so much divided, not only by national, but political prejudices, and in which every statement, not supported by unquestionable authority, would be liable to be called in question, or discredited. For the same reason, care has been taken to quote a preponderance of authority, in every instance where it was possible, from writers on the opposite side from that which an English historian, surveying events with the feelings which attachment to a Constitutional Monarchy produces, may be supposed to adopt; and the reader will find every fact almost in the internal history of the Revolution supported by two Republican, and one Royalist authority; and every event in the military narrative drawn from at least two

writers on the part of the French, and one on that of their opponents.

The second rule adopted was to give the arguments for and against every public measure, in the words of those who originally brought them forward, without any attempt at paraphrase or abridgement. This is more particularly the case in the debates of the National Assembly of France, the Parliament of England, and the Council of State under Napoleon; and in effecting the selection, the author has been most forcibly impressed with the prodigious, though often perverted and mistaken ability, which distinguished those memorable discussions. There can be no doubt, that in thus presenting the speeches in the words of the real actors on the political stage, the work has assumed in the first volumes a dramatic air, unusual at least in modern histories; but it is the only method by which the spirit and feelings of the moment could be faithfully transmitted to posterity, or justice done to the motives, on either side, which influenced mankind; and a modern author need not hesitate to follow an example

which has been set by Thucydides, Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus.

It seemed advisable to adopt this plan for another reason. The course of a Revolution is so completely at variance with the ordinary tenor of human events, and the motives which then influence men are so different from those which in general obtain an ascendency, that without the running commentary of their own words, it is impossible to do justice either to their motives, or the great moral lessons to be derived from their history. It is by comparing their words with their actions only, that the deceitful nature of the passions by which they have been misled can be made manifest, and the important truth demonstrated, that nations, not less than individuals, are seduced by alluring expressions; that it is in the name of humanity that thousands are massacred; and under the banners of freedom that the most grievous despotism is established.

No attempt has been made on any occasion to disguise the real opinion of the author, but, on the contrary, the conclusions which he thought fairly deducible from the events

which were recounted, have been fully given, with the grounds on which they are founded. But, at the same time, he has exerted himself to the utmost to give the arguments with force and accuracy, which were advanced, or may be advanced, for the opposite side of the question; and those who do not go along with these conclusions, will find in the context the materials for correcting them.

If there is any one opinion which, more than another, is impressed on the mind by a minute examination of the changes of the French Revolution, it is the perilous nature of the current into which men are drawn, who commit themselves to the stream of political innovation; and the great difficulty experienced by those engaged in the contest, even though gifted with the greatest intellect and the most resolute determination, in avoiding the commission of many crimes, amidst the stormy scenes to which it rapidly brings them. It is not difficult to perceive the final cause of this law of Nature, or the important purpose it is intended to serve in the moral government of the world, by expelling from society, through the force of suffering, passions inconsistent with its existence;

but it is a consideration of all others the best calculated to inspire forbearance and moderation, in forming an opinion of the intentions or actions of others placed in such trying and calamitous circumstances, and to exemplify the justice of the sacred precept, "to judge of others as we would wish they should judge of ourselves." Inexorable and unbending, therefore, in his opposition to false principles, it is the duty of the historian of such times, to be lenient and considerate in his judgment of particular men; and touching lightly on the weakness of such as are swept along by the waves, to reserve the weight of his censure for those who put the perilous torrent in motion.

It is the duty of the historian, in recounting the events of a period, when great and general public calamities have been produced, by abuses of a protracted kind, or the false application of principles which are just to a limited extent, to put in as clear a point of view as possible the consequences of the errors, whether in government or public opinion, which he is engaged in tracing. The annals of Tacitus are justly filled with indignant

exclamations against the tyranny of the Emperors, and the decay of Roman virtue; those of the religious wars, with pictures of the ruinous consequences of religious fanaticism. The history of the French Revolution alternately directs the mind to both the great sources of human oppression. Its earlier years suggest at every page reflections on the evils of political fanaticism, and the terrible consequences of democratic fervour; the latter on the debasing effects of absolute despotism, and the sanguinary march of military ambition.

The composition of the volumes now submitted to the public formed the recreation of many years, during the intervals of laborious professional employments; they were completed before the second French Revolution broke out, or any political changes were contemplated in this country. The progress of domestic, as well as foreign changes, since that event, has given the author no reason to doubt the soundness of the conclusions drawn from the composition of the annals of the first great convulsion, and inspired him with gloomy presentiments as to the future fate of

his country; but no person will more sincerely rejoice than himself, if the course of time shall demonstrate that these fears were ill founded, and that England has no cause to apprehend danger from innovations which proved so destructive to her more empassioned rival.

Finally, when he looks back to the vast theatre of splendid and heroic achievements which it is the object of these pages to commemorate; when he reflects on the talent which has been exerted in the actions, and the genius which has been displayed in the narratives which are here passed under review, the author cannot but feel his own inadequacy to so great an undertaking, or avoid giving expression to the feeling, that if the work contains any interest, it is in justice to be ascribed to the virtue, the bravery, or ability of others, and that its numerous defects he can impute to no one but himself.

A. ALISON.

January 21, 1833.

INTRODUCTION.

ARGUMENT.

Importance and Magnificence of the Subject—Comparison of the Era of Napoleon with others in the World—Extraordinary varieties of Character and Events which it exhibited—Causes of this Diversity—Causes of the early Depression of the Lower Orders, and consequent universality of, and necessity for Slavery—First causes which lead to Freedom—The Independence of Pastoral Life—The Security of Walled Cities—The Protection of Mountain Retreats—Limited extent of Freedom in Ancient Times—Different Policy of the Romans—Its prodigious Effects—Irruption of the Northern Nations—Its great consequences—Lamentable prostration of the Vanquished—Separation between the different Classes of Society in Modern Times—First Origin of Representative Governments—Causes which led to it in Modern Europe—They were taken from the Assemblies of the Church—And, in consequence, were universally established in Europe—Fatal defect of the Feudal System—Causes of its Decay—Its Decline in Spain, France, Germany, and England—It was only fitted for a Barbarous Age—Progress of Urban Freedom in the South of Europe—Rapid rise of the Urban Civilisation of the Towns of Italy—Their great and patriotic Efforts—Causes of their Decline—Decline of Flemish Freedom—Causes which restored Liberty—Influence of Christianity—Art of Printing—Its vast Effects both in Good and Evil—Discovery of Gunpowder—Its Influence on the Progress of Freedom, and Destroying the Power of the Nobility—Increase of Luxury tended to the same effect—Combination of these Causes in inducing the French Revolution.

THERE are few periods in the history of the world which can be compared, in point of interest and importance, to that which embraces the progress and termination of the French Revolution. In no former age were events of such magnitude crowded together, or interests so momentous at issue between contending nations. From the flame which was kindled in

Europe, the whole world has been involved in conflagration; and a new era dawned upon both hemispheres from the effects of its expansion. With the first rise of a free spirit in France, the liberty of North America was established, and its last exertions spread the discordant passion for independence through the wide extent of its Southern Continent. In the midst of a desperate contest in Europe, the British empire in India has unceasingly extended, and the ancient fabric of Hindoo superstition yielded to the force of European civilisation. Though last to be reached by the destructive flame, the power of Russia has been infinitely extended by the contests in which she has been engaged; and the dynasties of Asia can now hardly withstand the arms which the forces of Napoleon were unable to subdue. Assailed by the energy of England on the south, and by the might of Russia on the north, the desolating reign of Mahometan oppression seems drawing to its close; and from the strife of European war two powers have emerged, which appear destined to carry the blessings of civilisation and the light of religion as far as the arm of conquest can reach, or the waters of the ocean extend.

Comparison of the Era of Napoleon with others in the world.

In the former history of the world, different eras are to be observed, which have always attracted the attention of men, from the interest of the events which they present, and the importance of the consequences to which they have led. It is in the midst of the greatest struggles of the species that the fire

has been struck which has most contributed to its improvement. In the contest between Grecian freedom and Persian despotism, the genius was elicited which has spread the spirit of philoscphy and the charms of art throughout mankind; in the severer struggles between the Romans and Carthaginians, that unconquerable spirit was produced, which in half a century extended the Roman empire over the whole surface of the civilised world; it was amidst the first combats between the Mahometans and the Christians that the genius of modern Europe took its rise, and engrafted the refinements of ancient taste on the energy of barbarian valour; from the wars between the Moors and the Spaniards, that the enterprise arose which burst the barriers of ancient knowledge, and opened to modern ambition the wonders of another hemisphere. The era of Napoleon will be ranked by future ages with those of Pericles, of Hannibal, and of the Crusades, not merely from the splendour of the events which it produced, but the magnitude of the effects by which it was followed.[1]

[1] Polyb. l. i. c. 1.

Within the space of twenty years, events were then accumulated, which would have filled the whole annals of a powerful state, in any former age, with instruction and interest. In that brief period were successively presented the struggles of an aged monarchy, and the growth of a fierce democracy; the energy of Republican valour, and the triumphs of Imperial discipline; the pride of barbarian conquest, and the glories of patriotic resistance. In the rapid

pages of its history will be found parallels to the long annals of ancient greatness; the genius of Hannibal, and the passions of Gracchus; the ambition of Cæsar, and the splendour of Augustus; the triumphs of Trajan, and the disasters of Julian. The power of France was less durable than that of Rome, only because it was more oppressive; it was more stubbornly resisted, because it did not bring the blessings of civilisation on its wings. Its course was hailed by no grateful nations, its progress marked by no experienced blessings; unlike the beneficent sun of Roman greatness, which shone only to improve, its light, like the dazzling glare of the meteor, "rolled, blazed, destroyed, and was no more."

Extraordinary varieties of character and events which it exhibited.

Nor were the varieties of character, which appeared on the scene during those eventful years, less deserving of attention. If the genius displayed was unprecedented, so also was the wickedness; if history has little to show comparable to the triumphs that were gained, it has no parallel to the crimes that were committed. The terrible severity of Danton, the cowardly cruelty of Robespierre, are as unexampled as the military genius of Napoleon, or the naval career of Nelson. If France may with reason pride herself upon the astonishing accumulation of talent which was brought to bear upon the fortunes of the state during the progress of the Revolution, she must share the disgrace of the inhuman crimes which were committed by its leaders, and borne by its supporters among the people. It is the

peculiar duty of the historian to preserve, for future admiration, the virtues which adorned, and to consign to eternal execration the vices which disgraced that eventful age:—"Exsequi sententias haud institui, nisi insignes per honestiam, aut notabili dedecore; quod præcipuum munus annalium reor, ne virtutes sileantur, utque pravis dictis factisque ex posteritate et infamia metus sit. Ceterum tempora illa adeo infecta, ut non modo priores civitatis, quibus claritudo sua obsequiis protegenda erat, sed omnes consulares, magna pars eorum, qui prætura functi, multique etiam pedarii senatores, certatim exsurgerent fœdaque et nimia censerent."[1]

[1] Tac. Annal, iii. 65.

The peculiar virtues and character of all the European nations were eminently exemplified during those disastrous years. The obstinate hostility of the Spaniards, the enthusiastic valour of the French, the ardent spirit of the Prussians, the persevering steadiness of the Austrians, the devoted courage of the Russians, the freeborn bravery of the English, have been successively put to the test. The boasted glories of Louis XIV. sink into insignificance compared to the triumphs of Napoleon; and the victories of Marlborough produced less important consequences than those of Vittoria and Waterloo. Since the Western World was arrayed against the Eastern on the shores of Palestine, no such assemblages of armed men have been seen as those which followed the standards of Napoleon, and the hordes which Attila displayed on the plains of Chalons,

were less formidable than those which Alexander led from the deserts of Scythia.

Nor were the intellectual exertions of this animating period less conspicuous than its warlike achievements. In this bloodless contest, the leaders of civilisation, the lords of the earth and the sea, outstripped all other states. The same age which witnessed the military glories of Wellington and Napoleon, beheld the completion of astronomical investigation by Laplace, and the hidden recesses of the heart unfolded by Sir Walter Scott. Earth told the history of its revolutions through the remains buried in its bosom, and the secrets even of material composition, yielded to the powers of philosophical analysis. Sculpture revived from its ashes under the taste of Canova; and the genius of Torwaldson again charmed the world by the fascinations of design; architecture displayed its splendour in the embellishments of the French metropolis; and the rising capital of Russia united to the solidity of Egyptian materials the delicacy of Grecian taste.[1] Even the rugged ridges of the Alps yielded to the force of scientific enterprise, and the barriers of nature were smoothed by the efforts of human perseverance; while the genius of Britain added a new element to the powers of art, and made fire the instrument of subduing the waves.

[1] Clarke's Travels, xi. 391, 392.

Effects so various could not have arisen from the ordinary course of human events. The talent developed was too great, the wickedness committed too appalling to be explained on the usual principles of

human nature. It seemed rather as if some higher powers had been engaged in a strife in which man was the visible instrument; as if the demons of hell had been let loose to scourge mankind, and the protection of Heaven for a time withdrawn from virtue to subject its firmness to the severest test. The fancy of antiquity would have peopled the scene with hostile deities supporting unseen the contests of armies; the severer genius of Christianity beheld in it the visible interposition of Almighty Power to punish the sins of a corrupted world.

There was nothing, however, supernatural in the events of that momentous age. The magnitude of the effects produced arose entirely from the intensity of the feelings which were roused; the extremes of virtue and vice which were exhibited, from the force of the incitements to the former, and the temptations to the latter, which were presented. The interests which were at stake were not the loss of provinces or the retreat of armies, but the fate of whole ranks in society, and the lives of multitudes, from the throne to the cottage; the passions which were called into action, not the momentary excitation of national rivalry, or the casual burst of hostile feeling, but the mutual and deep-rooted hatred which had been gathering strength from the foundation of the world. The friends of liberty inhaled their spirit from the example of antiquity, and drank deep of the fountains which the writers of Greece and Rome had opened; the supporters of the throne

Causes of this diversity.

struck the profounder chords of religion and loyalty, and summoned to their aid the precepts of Catholic faith, and the honour of modern nobility. The fervour of ancient eloquence, the recollections of classical achievement, warmed the former; the feelings of hereditary devotion, the glories of chivalrous descent, animated the latter. It was not the ripple of a minute that burst upon the shore, but the long swell of the Atlantic, wafted from distant realms, and heaved on the bosom of remote antiquity.

The struggle between the high and the low, the throne and the people, has subsisted from a remote period. But it is only in modern times that the principles of general freedom have been established, or those powers brought into collision, which had been mutually gaining strength from the earliest times.

Causes of the early depression of the Lower Orders.

How just soever it may appear to us, that the welfare and interests of the great body of the people should be protected from the aggressions of the powerful, there is nothing more certain than that such is not the primitive or original state of society. The varieties of human character, the different degrees of intellectual or physical strength with which men are endowed, the consequences of accident, misfortune, or crime, the destitution and helpless state of the poor in the infancy of civilisation, early introduce the distinction of ranks, and precipitate the lower orders into that state of dependence on their superiors which is known by the name of Slavery. This institution, however odious its name has now justly

become, is not an evil when it first arises; it only becomes such by being continued in circumstances different from those in which it originated, and in times when the protection it affords to the poor is no longer required.

Consequent universality of Slavery.

The universality of slavery in the early ages of mankind, is a certain indication that it is unavoidable, from the circumstances in which the human species is every where placed in the first stages of society. Where capital is unknown, property insecure, and violence universal, there is no security for the lower classes but in the protection of their superiors, and the sole condition on which this can be obtained is that of slavery. Property in the person, and labour of the poor, is the only inducement which can be held out to the opulent to take them under their protection. Compulsion is the only power which can render labour general in the many ages which must precede the influence of artificial wants, or a general taste for its fruits. Humanity, justice, and policy, so powerful in civilized ages, are then unknown, and the sufferings of the destitute are as much disregarded as those of the lower animals. If they belonged to no lord, they would speedily fall a prey to famine or violence. How miserable soever the condition of slaves may be in those unruly times, they are incomparably better off than they would have been if they had incurred the destitution of freedom.[1]

[1] Sism. Hist. de France, i. 50-160.

The simplicity of rural or patriarchal manners

mitigates the severity of an institution which necessity had first introduced. The slaves among the Arabs or the Tartars enjoyed nearly as much happiness as their masters; their occupations, fare, and enjoyments, were nearly the same.* To this day, the condition of a slave in all the Eastern empires differs but little from that of a domestic servant in modern Europe; and even the enfranchised poor of France and England would find something to envy in the situation of a Russian peasant. Succour in sickness, employment in health, and maintenance in old age, are important advantages even in the best regulated states; during the anarchy of early times, their value is incalculable.[1]

[1] Park's Travels in Africa, i. 434. Volney's Syria, p. 321. Clarke's Travels, i. 901–70.

There is no instance, in the history of the world, of the peasantry in a level country, who are solely employed in the labours of agriculture, emancipating themselves without external aid from this state of dependence on their superiors. Attached to the soil, weighed down by the toil of cultivation, separated from each other, and limited in the sphere of their observation, ignorant from want of mutual intercourse, and yet destitute of the energy of savage life, they have every where remained, from generation to generation, unable either to combine against violence, or to escape from oppression. The inhabitants of Mesopotamia, of Egypt, or of Bengal, like

* "Dominum ac servum, nullis educationis deliciis dignoscas. Inter eadem pecora, in eodem humo degunt; donec ætas separet ingenuos virtus agnoscat."[2]

[2] Tacitus de Mor. Germ. c. 20.

the serfs of Poland, or the boors of Russia in recent times, have continued, from the earliest ages, in the same state of passive and laborious existence.

It is by the aid of other habits, and by the influence of a different state of society, that the first rudiments of freedom have been established among mankind.

First Causes which lead to Freedom.

The first of these causes is to be found in the independence and solitude of the pastoral life. The Arabs, who followed their camels over the sands of Arabia, the Scythians, who wandered over the deserts of Tartary, were subject to no oppression, because they were restrained by no necessity. If the chief of a tribe was guilty of any act of injustice, his subjects had it always in their power to depart with their families and herds, and before a few hours had elapsed, all trace of their route had disappeared in the sand of the desert, or amidst the vegetation of the steppes. Like our first parents, on leaving Paradise, the world was all before them, and wherever grass flourished, or water was to be found, they were equally ready to sojourn and increase. From this independence of the shepherd tribes, joined to the boundless extent of the plains which nature had prepared for their reception, have sprung the freedom and energy of the pastoral character; the conquests of the Arabs, and the settlements of the Scythians, have arisen from the same cause of hardihood in their native wilds; and to the roving habits of our forefathers, who spread from the centre of Asia to the

The independence of Pastoral Life.

extremities of Europe, the liberty of modern Europe is mainly to be ascribed, and all the glories of European civilisation have sprung—the arts of Greece, the arms of Rome, the chivalry of France, and the navy of England.

The second great source of freedom in human affairs is to be found in the protection and opulence of walled cities. Amidst the security which they afford, industry is excited by the desire of enjoyment, and capital accumulates from the means of employing it. With the growth of wealth succeeds a consciousness of the independence which it confers; with the extension of property, an aversion to the oppression which might endanger it. The assembly of multitudes awakens a sense of strength; community of interest engenders public feeling, proximity of residence suggests the means of common defence. Amidst the growing wealth and rapid communication of ideas which prevail in commercial cities, the spirit of freedom is awakened, and the hatred to oppression confirmed. From this source the whole liberty of antiquity took its rise; their republics were all cradled in a single city, and confined to the citizens whom it produced; and the names of a state, and political body, were derived from that of a town in which alone they were found to exist.

The Security of Walled Cities.

The last source of freedom is to be found in the sequestered situation and independent habits of mountaineers. Amidst the solitude of the Alps, or the fastnesses of the Himalaya, vigour is called forth by

The Protection of Mountain Retreats.

the necessity for exertion, and independence preserved by security from insult. The oppressors of mankind pass unheeding by these cradles of intrepid courage; and attracted by the spoils of more opulent states, leave in their native obscurity the poor and hardy inhabitants of mountainous regions. From generation to generation, accordingly, the same free and independent habits are perpetuated in the mountain tribes of the world; and while the vigour of conquerors melts in the plains as Alpine snows under the warmth of a southern sun, the freedom of the mountains is preserved, like their glaciers, in virgin purity, amidst the blasts and the severity of winter.

Limited extent of Freedom in Ancient times.

The freedom of the ancient world expired in the course of ages, from the limited number of those who enjoyed its benefits. This was the chief cause of its decay; but it arose unavoidably from the limited sources from which freedom took its rise in ancient times. Republics, such as Athens or Sparta, where the freemen did not exceed 20,000, while the slaves were above 400,000, were not free countries; they were cities, in which a certain portion of the inhabitants, little qualified to exercise them, had acquired exclusive privileges, while they kept the great body of their brethren in a state of servitude.* Even the philosophers of antiquity, in their speculations concerning a perfect republic, could not go beyond a small territory, ruled by a single city, in which the

* Athens contained, at its greatest period, 21,000, Sparta, 39,000 citizens.—GIBBON, i. 383.

great body of the people were slaves. The privileged citizens evinced, on every occasion, the strongest repugnance to extending their rights to others; and, in consequence, were exposed, on the first reverse, to the defections of all their allies. Hence the liberty of the Grecian republics was short-lived and precarious. The ruling class became corrupted from the influence of prosperity, or the seductions of wealth, and no infusion of energy took place from the lower, to renovate their strength, or supply their place; the political body depended upon the exertions of a single class, and with its virtue the public freedom expired. The splendour of success, or the efforts of genius, might retard the approach of disaster, or conceal the growth of corruption; but the season of maturity stripped the tree of its foliage, and the trunk, fed by no perennial fountain, and invigorated by no ascending nourishment, yielded without resistance to the blasts of winter.[1]

[1] Plutarch in Pericles. Gib. i. 53, 54, and 383. Arist. de Rep. i. 4, 5. Mitford, ix. 10, 11. Staël, Rév. Franç. i. 10, 11.

Different Policy of the Romans. Its prodigious effects.

With a magnanimity so extraordinary, and so contrary to the ordinary principles of human nature, that it may almost be ascribed to Divine interposition, the Romans, from the foundation of their republic, admitted all the subjects of conquered states to a share of their privileges, and they received in return the empire of the world. From the first junction of the Romans and Sabines, to the final extension by the Emperor Antoninus of the privileges of Roman citizens to the whole civilized world, this policy was steadily pursued; unshaken by success, unsubdued

by disaster.* The Romans felt the benefit of this magnanimous conduct in the steady adherence of their allies during the severest periods of national misfortune. Even the defeats of the Trebia and Trasymene were not followed by the defections of a single ally; while the first serious disaster of Carthage, which confined its privileges to its own citizens, stript the Republic of all its subsidiary forces. The steady growth, unequalled extent, and long duration of the Roman empire, proves the wisdom of their political system; but it fell a prey at length to the dreadful evil of domestic slavery.† It was this incurable evil which, even in the time of Augustus, thinned the ranks of the legions; which, in process of time, filled the armies with mercenary soldiers, and the provinces with great proprietors; which subsequently rendered it impracticable to raise a military force in the southern provinces of the empire, and at length consumed the vitals of the state, and left nothing to withstand the Barbarians, but nobles who wanted courage to defend their property, and slaves who were destitute of property to rouse their courage.[1]

[1] Polyb. iii. c. 9, & 6. Ferg. Rome, v. 277. Gib. iii. 66, vii. 212, v. 263. Sism. Hist. de France, i. 82.

* The Roman citizens, in the time of Paulus Emilius, amounted to 337,000 persons capable of bearing arms; the admission of the Italian allies by Caius Gracchus, swelled their numbers to 4,163,000 in the time of Augustus; and the extension of the franchise to the Gauls augmented them to 6,900,000. The Emperor Antoninus, by a general edict, extended the privilege to the whole empire.[2]

[2] Plutarch in Caius Gracchus, and Paul Emilius. Ferg. v. iii. Gib. i. 78.

† The slaves in the Roman empire were extremely numerous; those of a single family were ascertained, on a melancholy occasion, to amount to 400 souls; but no general enumeration or peculiar garb was allowed, lest it should be discovered how few the freemen were in comparison to their number.—TACITUS. Tac. Anl. xi. 24.

First irruption of the Northern Nations. Its great effects.

The barbarians who overthrew the Roman Empire, brought with them from their deserts the freedom and energy of savage life. Amidst the expiring emb of civilized institutions, they spread the flames of barbarian independence; on the decayed stock of urban liberty, they engrafted the vigorous shoots of pastoral freedom. From their exploits, the thrones, the monarchs, and the nobles of Europe, took their rise; in their customs is to be found the source of the laws and institutions of modern times; in their settlements, the origin of the peculiar character by which the different European nations are distinguished. Their conquests were not in the end a mere change of government, or the substitution of one race of monarchs for another; but a total subversion of the property, customs, and institutions of the vanquished people. Their cities were destroyed, their temples ruined, their movables plundered, their estates confiscated.* The daughters of the greatest among the conquered were compelled to receive husbands from the leaders of their enemies, while those of the inferior classes were exposed to the grossest insults, or driven in despair to the protection of convents; and the youth of the other sex, born to splendid possessions, were sold as slaves, or compelled to labour as serfs on the lands which

Lamentable prostration of the vanquished.

* So far was this universal system of disinheriting carried after the Norman Conquest, that, by a general enactment, inserted in Doomsday Book, all alienations by Saxons, subsequent to the Conquest of William; and all titles to estates not derived from him, and registered in his books, were declared null.—THIERRY, ii. p. 278.

their fathers held as proprietors. To such extremes of distress were the inhabitants of the vanquished states sometimes reduced, that they voluntarily submitted to bondage as the price of life, and sought in slavery the only protection which could be obtained from the violence by which they were surrounded.[1]

[1] Thierry, ii 24, 96, 97, 100, 101. Sism. Hist. de France, i. 277.

It was not, however, at once, or by any sudden act of violence, that this complete transfer of property from the vanquished to the victors took place. The settlements of the Northern nations in the provinces of the Roman Empire did not resemble the conquest either of the Roman legions, or the armies of modern Europe, but were rather akin, though more violent, to the gradual inroad which the Irish poor have effected into the provinces of Western Britain in these times. Wave after wave succeeded before the whole country was occupied; one province was overrun for a whole generation before another was invaded; and a more equitable division of goods between the natives and the conquerors at first took place than could have been expected, where power was at the disposal of such rude barbarians. Sometimes a half, sometimes a third, of the vanquished lands, were left in the hands of the old proprietors; and although the portion was abridged by each successive inroad of conquerors, yet it was several centuries before the transfer was completely effected; and some remnants of the ancient free, or allodial tenure, have in all the European monarchies survived the whole changes of the middle ages. Gradually, however, the work of spoliation

was extended; the depressed condition, and timid character of the native inhabitants, rendered them incapable of resisting the inroads of their fierce neighbours; numbers surrendered their properties for the benefit of feudal protection; the daughters of the vanquished, if entitled to lands, almost all chose their husbands from the sons of the conquerors, or were compelled to do so by the power of the sovereign; and at length the change was generally effected, and the land had almost every where passed from the Romans to the Northern proprietors. Before the 10th century, the change was complete.[1]

[1] Guizot, Essais sur l'Hist. de France, 330, 252, 280, 301. Thierry, Essais sur l'Histoire, 87, 99.

Separation thence between the classes of society in modern times.

The lamentable state of weakness and decay into which the Roman empire had fallen in the latter ages of its existence, in consequence of the universality of slavery in all its provinces, rendered the people totally incapable of preventing this general spoliation. They submitted, almost without resistance, to every invader, and could hardly be induced to take up arms, even by the most incessant foreign and domestic aggressions. Hence arose a total separation of the higher and lower orders, and an entire change in the habits, occupations, and character of the different ranks of society. From the free conquerors of the Roman provinces have sprung the noble and privileged classes of modern Europe; from their enslaved subjects, the numerous and degraded ranks of peasants and labourers. The equality and energy of pastoral life stamped a feeling of pride and independence upon the descendants of the conquerors, which in many countries is yet undiminished; the

misery and degradation of the vanquished riveted chains about their necks, which were hardly loosened for a thousand years.[1]

[1] Thierry, Introduction, i. 8, 9 Sism. France, i. 74, 87.

In this original separation of the different ranks of society, consequent upon the invasion of the Franks into Gaul, is to be found the remote cause of the evils which induced the FRENCH REVOLUTION. But many ages were destined to elapse, before the conflicting interests thus created came into collision; and it was by the gradual agency of several concurring causes that the energy was restored to the mass of the people, which had been lost amidst the tranquillity of Roman servitude, and the violence of feudal oppression.

When the lands of the vanquished people were at length completely divided, and the military followers of the victorious invaders had completely overspread the conquered territory, the nobles despised their subjects too much to court their assistance in periods of danger. Shut up in castles, and surrounded by their own military retainers, they neither required the aid, nor felt for the sufferings of their bondsmen. The ravages of the Normans, the cruelty of the Huns, excited but little compassion while it was wreaked only on the slaves of the country; and the baron, secure within his walls, beheld with indifference his villages in flames, and the long files of weeping captives who were carried off from beneath his ramparts by the desolating invaders. During these long ages of feudal anarchy, the lower orders neither improved in courage nor rose in importance; the lapse of time

served only to increase their degradation, by extinguishing the remembrance of better times. [1]

[1] Thierry, i. 162, ii. 96. Gib. x. 242.

First Origin of Representative Governments.

But the conquests of the Northern nations led to one important consequence—the establishment of representative governments in the provinces of the empire. The liberty of antiquity, cradled in single cities, was confined to the citizens who were present on the spot, and could take an active part in the public deliberations. Though the Romans with unexampled wisdom extended the rights of citizenship to the conquered provinces, yet the idea of admitting them to a share of the representation never occurred to their minds; and the more important privileges of a citizen could only be exercised by actually repairing to the metropolis. The unavoidable consequence of this was, that the populace of the capital, in all the free states of antiquity, exercised the principal powers of government; from their passions the public measures took their rise; and by their tumults revolutions in the state were effected. Hence the violence, the anarchy, and the inconstancy by which their history was so often distinguished, and which, though concealed amidst the blaze of ancient eloquence, the searching eye of modern history has so fully illustrated. [2]

[2] Mitford's Greece, ix. 68, 87.

The Northern nations, on the other hand, who established themselves on the ruins of the Roman empre, were actuated by different feelings, and influenced by opposite habits. The liberty which they brought with them from their woods, or which had

sprung up amidst the independence of the desert, knew no locality, and was confined to no district. The whole nation was originally free; and that freedom was equally preserved and valued in the cultivated plain as in the desert wilds. When the military followers of a victorious chief were settled in a province they had conquered, they still regarded their leader with somewhat of their original independence; and he was distinguished from them only by the pre-eminence of his rank in actual war, and the magnitude of his allotment of the vanquished lands. The sea-kings, who so long desolated the maritime provinces of France and England, and the Anglo-Saxons, who laid the foundation of the English empire, possessed hardly any authority over their followers but during the period of actual service. The Franks, who, under Clovis, established the French monarchy, owed but a nominal allegiance to their chief. Elevated on the shields of their followers, their leaders owed their dignity to the voluntary choice of their fellow-soldiers; and even in moments of triumph, the meanest soldiers were not afraid of reminding them of the tenure by which they held their authority.[1]

[1] Thierry, ii. 321. Hume, i. 264. Turner's Anglo-Saxons, i. 97. Sism. France, i. 372. Hallam, i. 153.

It was the settlement of brave and energetic nations in rich and highly-cultivated provinces, which led to the separation of the victors over the conquered districts, and the establishment of an independent aristocracy amidst the decaying wealth of ancient servitude. Had the country been less richly cultiva-

Causes which led to it in Modern Europe.

ted, the followers of the Northern invaders would have been lost amidst the seductions of cities, or returned, after a predatory incursion, to the solitudes which protected them from pursuit. It was the discovery of rich and cultivated districts, tenanted by a skilful but unwarlike people, which encouraged the rural settlement of the conquerors, which rendered the protection of cities unnecessary, and provided a counterpoise to their allurements; and by establishing the invaders in a permanent manner in the country, long preserved their manners from corruption, and rendered the servitude of the Roman empire one remote cause of the liberty of modern Europe.

On the first settlement of the victorious nations, the popular assemblies of the soldiers were an actual convocation of the military array of the kingdom. William the Conqueror summoned his whole military followers to assemble at Winchester, and 60,000 men obeyed the mandate, the poorest of whom held property adequate to the maintenance of a horseman and his attendants. The meetings of the *Champs-de-Mai* were less a deputation from the followers of Clovis, than an actual congregation of their numbers in one vast assembly. But in process of time the burden of travelling from a distance was severely felt, and the prevalence of sedentary habits rendered the landed proprietors unwilling to undertake the risk or expense of personal attendance on the great council of the State. Hence the introduction of PARLIAMENTS, or REPRESENTATIVE LEGISLATURES,

the greatest addition to the cause of liberty which modern times has afforded; which combine the energy of a democratic with the caution of an aristocratic government; which temper the turbulence, and allay the fervour of cities, by the slowness and the tenacity of country life; and which, where the balance is duly preserved in the composition of the Assembly, provide, in the variety of its interests and habits, a permanent check upon the violence or injustice of a part of its members.[1]

[1] Thierry, 286. Sism. France, i. 231.

It is doubtful, however, whether these causes, powerful as they are, would have led to the introduction of that great and hitherto unknown change in government, which the representative system introduced, had not a model existed for imitation, in which, for a series of ages, it had been fully established. The Councils of the Church had, so early as the sixth century, introduced over all Christendom the most perfect system of representation: Delegates, from the most remote dioceses in Europe and Asia, had there assembled to deliberate on the concerns of the faithful; and every Christian priest, in the humblest station, had some share in the formation of those great assemblies, by whom the general affairs of the Church were to be regulated. The formation of Parliaments, under the Representative system, took place in all the European States in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The industry of antiquaries may carry the Wittenagemots, or actual assembly of leading men, a few generations farther back; but

They are taken from the Assemblies of the Church.

six centuries before, the councils of Nice and Antioch had exhibited perfect models of a universal system of representation, embracing a wider sphere than the whole extent of the Roman empire. There can be no doubt that it was this example, so generally known, and of such powerful authority, which determined the imitation of the other members of the community, where they had any common concerns which required deliberation; and thus, to the other blessings which civilisation owes to Christianity, are to be added those inestimable advantages which have flowed from the establishment of the Representative system.[1]

[1] Salvandy, Hist. de la Pologne, i. 105, 106. Guizot, Essais sur l'Hist. de France. Thierry, Essais sur l'Histoire de France.

Universally established in Europe.

In every part of Europe, accordingly, where the Northern conquerors established themselves, the rudiments of a representative government are to be found. In all, the barons settled in the country, and the legislative authority was vested in assemblies of their representatives, who, under the name of Wittenagemots, Parliaments, States-General, or Cortes, were brought together at stated periods to deliberate on the public concerns. So naturally did this institution spring from the habits and situations of the military settlers, and so little did its first founders anticipate the important consequences which have flowed from its adoption, that the right of sending representatives to Parliament was generally considered not as a privilege, but a burden; and that share in the legislature, which is now so much the object of contention and desire, was originally viewed

as an oppressive duty, for which those who exercised it were entitled to indemnification from their more fortunate brethren. The Barons, however, were long animated by a strong feeling of independence, and in every part of Europe, at their first establishment, diffused the principle of resistance to arbitrary authority. In Spain, accordingly, France, Germany, and Flanders, we find them manfully resisting the encroachments of the sovereign, and in all the same privileges of not being taxed without their consent, and of concurring in the acts of the legislature, early established.[1]

[1] Hallam, i. 253; and ii. 67, 130. Villaret, 125. Hume, ii. 116, 271. Ersk. Inst. 1, 3. Comines, iv. c. 13. Du. Clerq. 389.

In all these states, however, the feudal system was subject to the same fatal defect: that it made no provision for the interests or welfare of the great body of the people. Like all other institutions, in which this defect existed, it involved in itself the principles of its own decay. The conquerors of the Roman empire deemed the inhabitants of the provinces in which they settled wholly unworthy of notice; and even in Magna Charta, while the privileges of the barons and the freemen were anxiously provided for, no stipulation of any importance was made for the extensive class of husbandmen or slaves. The decline in the virtue of the barbarous settlers was in most instances extremely rapid, and the succeeding wave of invaders generally found the first set lost in sloth, or destroyed by luxury. In the miserable and degraded barons, who deserted Roderick in his contest with the Moorish invaders of Spain,

Fatal defects of the Feudal System.

we can hardly discern a trace of resemblance to the impetuous warriors, who, under Attila, penetrated into that secluded province of the Roman empire; and the Moorish conquerors were in a few centuries reduced to the same degraded state from the operation of the same causes. Even the genius and triumphs of Charlemagne were unequal to renovating the mixture of barbarism and effeminacy of which he formed the head; and humanity never appeared in a more pusillanimous or degraded form than among the Rois Faineans, the unworthy successors of Charles Martel, and of the barons who died for the liberty of Christendom on the field of Tours, All the efforts of Charlemagne, for the improvement of his people, were thwarted by the limited number of free inhabitants whom they contained. A few thousand freemen were there to be found scattered among as many million of slaves; and, in his own lifetime, he had the misfortune of beholding the progress of corruption even among the troops whom he had led to victory. The same cause blasted all the beneficent institutions of Alfred, for the protection and improvement of his country, and exposed the English nation for so long a period to desolation and ruin from a small body of Northern invaders.[1]

[1] Condé, Hist. des Arab. i. 62; ii. 125. Sism. France, ii. 279, 355, 410; iii. 96. 97. Turner's Anglo-Saxons, ii. 66.

Effects of the Private Wars of the Nobles.

The private wars of the nobles with each other were the first circumstance which renewed the courage, and revived the energy of the feudal barons. It is to this cause, joined to the fortification of the castles, and the constant use of arms by the retainers

of the landowners, that the restoration of the military courage of France is to be ascribed. The Spanish barons were trained to courage in the stern school of necessity, and regained, in the mountains of Galicia, the valour which their conquerors were losing amidst the luxuries of Cordova. The English military spirit, which had decayed from the same causes, was restored by the private wars of the nobles during the reign of Stephen; and, amidst the havoc and ruin of the country, that courage was elicited which was destined to lay the foundation of British liberty in a happier age.[1]

[1] Hume i. 296. Sism. France, iii 374, 451. Condé, ii. 126, 368, 494.

But the feudal liberty was at length destroyed by the change of manners, and the natural progress of opulence. Being confined to a limited class of society, it expired with the virtue of those who alone were interested in its defence; conferring little upon the great body of the people, it derived nothing from the talents which lay buried in their bosom. Wealth enervated its possessors, and no inferior class existed to supply their place; the rich became corrupted, and the poor did not cease to be slaves. The progress was different in different states, but in all the result was the same. The kingdoms both of Arragon and Castile were governed in their early history by more limited monarchs than the Plantagenets of England, and their nobles did not yield to the barons of Runnymede in zeal for the preservation of their privileges; but it was in vain that they extorted concessions from their sovereigns, and confirmed them

Causes of the Decay of the Feudal Liberty.

on occasion of every renewal of the coronation oath. The spirit of freedom, and with it the liberties of the nation, died away upon the decay of the feudal aristocracy, from the selfishness and degradation of the great body of the people. The Cortes maintained its independent spirit, and the "Great Privilege," the Magna Charta of Arragon, was never repealed; but the cities neglected sending representatives to its assemblies, and many suffered their right to a place in its deliberations to expire. The nobles became attached to the splendour of a court, and, with the forms of a limited, Spain became a despotic monarchy.[1]

Its decline in Spain and France.

[1] Blanca's Com. 669. Hal. Mid. Ages, ii. 38, 45, 67. Mariana, Teorie de los Cortes, 395.

In France, the nobility, during the period of their feudal vigour, reduced the Crown to nearly the same limited sway as prevailed in England, insomuch, that for nearly half a century it was a general opinion, confirmed by several solemn acts of the throne, that no tax could be levied without the consent of the Three Estates. But the skeleton of a free government perished with the decay of feudal manners: The influence of the Crown, and the attractions of a metropolis, drew the nobility to Paris; and liberty in the country, deprived of its only supporters, speedily fell to the ground.[2]

[2] Mabl. Obs. sur l'Hist. de France, t. v. c. 1; and Hallam, i. 256, 270, 391.

The progress was somewhat different in Germany, although there, as elsewhere in the European monarchies, the feudal system at first established the rudiments of a free government, the illegality of taxes without the consent of the people, and the partition

In Germany.

of the legislative sovereignty with the states of the kingdom. The power of the great barons rendered the empire elective, and broke down into separate states the venerable fabric of the Germanic confederacy; but their sway within their own domains, being not restrained by the vigour or intelligence of the people, gradually became unlimited, and the frame of liberty was obliterated in the rising ambition of military power.[1]

[1] Schmidt, vi. 8. Hallam, ii. 130.

Notwithstanding the long and hereditary attachment of the English people to free institutions—notwithstanding the diffusion of this spirit by the establishment of trial by jury, and its preservation by the protection of insular situation, the usual causes of decline had begun to operate, and the feudal independence of the barons in the middle ages had yielded to the corrupted subservience of opulent times. The desolating wars of York and Lancaster thinned the ranks of the nobles; the increase of luxury, by changing the direction of their expenditure, sapped the foundations of their power. Under the Tudor princes, the indifference of Parliament to the liberties of the people had already commenced. Europe could not exhibit a monarch who governed his people with more absolute sway than Henry VIII., nor is any thing in modern times more instructive than the pliant servility with which both the Parliament and the people obeyed his despotic commands. History can hardly exhibit an example of a reign in which a

And England.

greater number of violent invasions were made, not only on public rights, but private property, in which justice was more disgracefully prostituted in courts of law, liberty more completely abandoned in the measures of Parliament, or caprice more tyrannically exerted on the throne. Those who ascribe the freedom of England solely to the feudal institutions, would do well to consider the condition of the country, and the servility of the people, during the reign of this ferocious tyrant—who confiscated the property of one-third of the landholders of his kingdom, and executed 72,000 persons in a single lifetime—or even perhaps of his more prudent and popular daughter.[1]

[1] Henry's Britain, xi. 260, 372. Hume, iii. 94, 389; iv. 275; v. 263, 363, 470.

Admirably adapted, therefore, as the feudal system was for preserving an independent spirit during the middle ages, gratefully as we must acknowledge its influence in restraining the power of the Northern conquerors, and preventing the very name of Right or Privilege from being swept away, as in the Asiatic monarchies, by the desolating hand of power: fully as we must admit that tyranny would have rioted without control, if, when the people were poor and disunited, the nobles had not been brave and free, still it is obvious that it was an institution suited only to a barbarous age, and alike incapable of being moulded, according to the changes which society undergoes, or of providing for the freedom of civilized times. With the institution of standing armies, the progress of luxury, the invention of gunpowder, and

It was only fitted for a barbarous age.

the rise of cities, it necessarily decayed. The liberty, which was built on no other foundation, has every where long since fallen to the ground.[1]

[1] Hal. i. 321.

The feudal system was in its vigour during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. When the barons dwelt in fortified castles on their estates, surrounded by a tenantry trained to warlike exercises, and attached alike by habit and interest to the fortunes of their chief; cased in armour from head to foot, and leading on a body of warlike and devoted retainers, they were alike formidable to the throne and the cottage. If they extorted privileges in their own favour from the sovereign, they gave none to their enslaved vassals. With a merciless hand, and unsparing severity, they checked the first struggles of the people for a share of that freedom which they so strenuously asserted for themselves. The insurrections of the *Jacquerie*, in France, of the peasants, under Wat Tyler, in England, and of the Flemings, under the brewer of Ghent, were repressed with a cruelty of which history affords few examples. The courage and enthusiasm of the multitude in vain contended for victory with steel-clad warriors, trained to arms from their earliest years. The knights broke through the ranks of the peasants with the same ease as they would have traversed an unarmed assembly; and the degraded serf, incapable of those efforts of heroism which animated the free shepherds of the Alps, sunk beneath the stroke of fate with the resignation of a martyr rather than the spirit of a warrior.[1]

[1] Hume, iii. 5, 7. Sismondi, x. 533, 540; xi. 434, 435.

Opulence undermined the Power of the Nobles.

But the power of the nobles, incapable of being subverted by force, was undermined by opulence; and the emancipation of the people, for which so many thousands had perished in vain, arose at length from the desires and follies of their oppressors. The baron was formidable when his life was spent in arms, and he headed the feudal array which had grown up under the shadow of his castle-walls; when his years were wasted in the frivolities of a court, and his fortune squandered in the luxuries of a metropolis, he became contemptible. His tenantry ceased either to venerate or follow a chief whom they seldom beheld; the seductions of cities became omnipotent to those who no longer valued their rural dependents; the desires of wealth, insatiable among persons who had the glittering prospect of a court before their eyes. The natural progress of opulence proved fatal to a power which made no provision for general felicity, and the wisdom of nature rendered the follies of the great the means of destroying the influence which they had rendered the instrument of oppression, instead of the bulwark of freedom.

Progress of Freedom in the South of Europe.

While this was the fate of the liberty which the barbarian conquerors of the Roman empire brought with them from their native wilds, the progress of events was different in the south of Europe, where the ancient traces of Roman civilisation had never been wholly extirpated, and the wild shoots of Gothic freedom had never fully expanded. The liberty of

modern Italy did not spring from the independence of the landed proprietors, but the free spirit of the inhabitants of towns; its cradle was not the hall of the feudal baron, but the forum of the industrious citizens. While the great landholders were engaged in projects of mutual slaughter, and issued only from their fastnesses in the Apennines to ravage the plains below, the inhabitants of the towns flourished under the protection of their native ramparts, and revived on their ancient hearths the decaying embers of urban liberty. At a time when the Transalpine States were still immersed in barbarism, and industry was beginning only to spring in sheltered situations, under the shadow of the castle wall, the Italian republics were already far advanced in opulence, and the arts had struck deep root amidst the monuments of ancient splendour. The age of Edward III., when the nobles of England were still living in rustic plenty on their estates, when rushes were spread on the floors instead of carpets, and few of the barons could sign their name, was contemporary with that of Petrarch and Dante, with the genius of Raphael, and the thought of Machiavel. When Charles VIII., at the head of the brave but barbarous nobility of France, burst into Italy at the close of the fifteenth century, he found himself in the midst of an opulent and highly civilized people, far advanced in the career of improvement, and abounding in merchants who numbered all the sovereigns of Europe among their debtors. When the feudal chieftain threatened to blow

his trumpets within the walls of Florence, her citizens offered to sound the tocsin, and the monarch of the greatest military kingdom of Europe shrunk from a contest with the burghers of a pacific republic.[1]

[1] Sism. Rep. Ital. iii. 157; v. 365; xii. 168. Hume, ii. 349.

Rapid Rise of the Urban Civilisation of Italy.

Their great and patriotic Efforts.

Nor were the civil virtues of this period of Italian greatness less remarkable than its opulence and splendour. So early as the thirteenth century, the Emperor of Germany was defeated by a coalition of the republics of Lombardy, and the virtues of the Grecian states were rivalled by the patriotism of modern freedom. History has to record with pride, that when the inhuman cruelty of the German soldiery placed the children of the citizens of Cremona before the walls of the city, to deter the besieged from discharging their weapons, their parents wept aloud, but did not cease to combat for their liberties; and that when eleven thousand of the first citizens of Pisa were confined in the prisons of Genoa, they sent a unanimous request to the Senate not to purchase their freedom by the surrender of one fortress in the hands of the republic. We speak with exultation of the efforts made by the British empire during the late war; but how great soever, they must yield to the exertions of Italian patriotism, which manned the rival fleets of Genoa and Venice with as many sailors, at the battle of La Meloria, as served the navies of England and France at Trafalgar.[2]

[2] Sism. Rep. Ital. iii. 90; iv. 22, 29.

Causes of their Decline.

But the republics of Italy yielded to the influence of the same causes which had proved so pernicious to the Grecian commonwealths, and destroyed the feudal

independence of the north of Europe. They made no provision for the liberties or interests of the great body of the people. The states of Florence, Venice, Genoa, and Pisa, were not in reality free: They were dynasties in which a few individuals had usurped the rights, and disposed of the fortunes of the great bulk of their fellow-citizens. During the most flourishing period of their history, the citizens of all the Italian republics did not amount to 20,000; and these privileged classes held as many millions in subjection. The citizens of Venice were 2500,—those of Genoa, 4500,—those of Pisa, Sienna, Lucca, and Florence, 6000. The right of citizenship, thus limited, descended in a few families, and was as carefully guarded from invasion as the private estates of the nobility. To the conquered provinces no privileges were extended; to the republics in alliance no rights communicated. The privileged classes, in the dominant state, anxiously retained the whole rights of government in their own hands, and the jealous spirit of mercantile monopoly ruled the fortunes of the state as much as it cramped the energies of the subject territory. From freedom, thus confined, no general benefit could be expected; on a basis thus narrowed, no structure of permanent duration erected. Even during their greatest prosperity they were disgraced by perpetual discord, springing from so unjust and arbitrary an exclusion; and the massy architecture of Florence still attests the period when every noble family was prepared to stand a siege in

its own palace, in defence of the rights which they sternly denied to their fellow-citizens.[1] The rapid progress, and splendid history of these aristocratic republics, may teach us the animating influence of freedom, even upon a limited class of society; their sudden decline, and speedy loss of public spirit, were the inevitable consequence of confining to a few the rights which should be shared by a larger circle.

[1] Sism. Rep. Ital. 12, 16, 18, 21.

Republics thus constituted were unable either to withstand the shocks of adverse, or resist the silent decay consequent upon prosperous fortune. The first great disaster stripped the state of all its allies, and reduced it to the forces that were to be found within its own walls. The Venetian oligarchy gave no rights to the conquered provinces in the Trevisane March, though the Senate announced, that in sending them the standard of St Marc, it restored their liberties; and accordingly in one day it was stripped of all its possessions, and reduced to its original limits within the Lagunæ of the capital. When Florence reduced the rival republic of Pisa, she received no addition of strength, because she gave no community of power; and the troops employed to keep the conquered state in subjection were so much lost to the victorious power. The dissolution of the Athenian Confederacy after the defeat before Syracuse, of the Lacedemonian power after the battle of Leuctra, of the Theban supremacy after the death of Epaminondas, have all their counterparts in the history of modern Italy, when, on any serious reverse to Venice, Flo-

rence, or Genoa, the cities of which they formed the head, broke off from a subjection which they hated, and joined the arms of any invader to destroy that invidious authority in which they were not permitted to bear a part. Without the disasters of fortune, the silent operation of time brought the weakness of age upon communities who depended only on the energies of the higher classes. The families in whose hands the sovereign power was vested became extinct from age, or enfeebled by opulence, and no infusion of vigour from the inferior orders took place to restore their energy; the number of citizens continually declined, while the discontents of those subjected to their influence incessantly increased. The experienced evils arising from such a form of government led to a very general dislike to its continuance; and to avoid the ruinous contests of factions, as many of the Italian republics made a voluntary surrender of their liberties, as lost them from the invasion of foreign power.[1]

[1] Sism. xii. 16, 18, 21; Mach. iii. c. 27.

The industry and wealth of Flanders early nourished a free spirit, and the utmost efforts were long made by the inhabitants of its cities for the maintenance of their liberties. But its freedom was confined to the burghers of the towns; the peasantry of the country joined their feudal leaders in combating the rising influence of the manufacturing classes, and the jealousies of rival industry generally prevented them from joining in any common measure for the defence of their independence. Once only an unhoped-for victory roused the whole country to arms,

Decline of Flemish Freedom.

and a leader of greater military experience might have established their freedom on a durable basis; but the burghers of Ghent had not the firmness of the shepherds of Unterwalden, and the victory of Resebecque crushed for centuries the rising independence of commercial industry under the barbarous yoke of feudal power.[1]

[1] Barante, i. 42, 43. Sism. France, xi. 249.

Experience, therefore, had demonstrated that the freedom which rose from the independence of the desert, equally with that which was nursed in the bosom of cities, was liable to decay, and that political wisdom was incapable of forming a community in which the seeds of that decline were not perceptible, which seemed the common lot of earthly things. It became, in consequence, a generally received opinion, that communities, like individuals, had a certain period of life allotted to them, which it was impossible, by any means, to prolong beyond a certain period; and that a season of activity and vigour was necessarily followed by one of lassitude and corruption. "The image," says Mr Ferguson, "of youth and old age was applied to nations; and communities, like single men, were supposed to have a period of life, and a length of thread, which was spun by the Fates, in one part uniform and strong, in another weakened and shattered by use, to be cut when the destined era is come, and to make way for a renewal of the emblem in the case of those who rose in succession."—"Carthage," says Polybius, "being so much the older than Rome, had felt her decay so

much the sooner, and the survivor too, he foresaw, carried in her bosom the seeds of mortality."[1]

[1] Civil Society, 340.

But while such was imagined, from former experience, to be the unavoidable fate of freedom wherever established, a variety of causes were silently operating, which communicated an unknown energy to the social system, and infused into modern states, even in periods of apparent decline, a share of the undecaying youth of the human race.

Causes which restored Liberty.

I. The first of these was the CHRISTIAN RELIGION. Slavery had been the ruin of all the states of antiquity. The influence of wealth corrupted the higher orders; and the lower, separated by a sullen line of demarcation from their superiors, furnished no accession of strength to revive their energies. But the influence of a religion, which proclaimed the universal equality of mankind in the sight of Heaven, and addressed its revelations in an especial manner to the poor, destroyed this ruinous distinction. In many states slavery gradually yielded to the rising influence of Christianity; the religious houses were the first who emancipated their vassals; their exhortations were unceasingly directed to extort the same concession from the feudal barons, and on their domains the first shoots of industrious freedom began to spring. While the vassals of the military proprietors were sunk in slavery, or lost in the sloth which follows so degraded a state, industry was reviving under the shadow of the monastic walls, and the free vassals of the religious establishments were flourishing in the

Influence of Christianity.

comparative security of their superstitious protection. Nor was it only by the equality which it proclaimed, and the security from violence which it afforded, that the influence of religion favoured the growth of freedom. By the enthusiasm which it awakened, from the universal interests which it addressed, the mass of the people were roused into political activity; thousands, to whom the blessings of liberty were unknown, and whose torpor no temporal concerns could dispel, were roused by the voice of religious fervour. The freedom of Greece, the discipline of Macedonia, produced only a transient impression on human affairs; but the fanaticism of Mahomet convulsed the globe. The ardour of chivalry led the nobles into action; the ambition of monarchs brought the feudal retainers into the field; but the enthusiasm of the Crusades awakened the dormant strength of the Western world. With the growth of religious zeal, therefore, the basis of freedom was immensely extended; into its ranks were brought, not the transient ebullitions of popular excitement, but the stern valour of fanaticism; and that lasting support which neither the ardour of the city, nor the independence of the desert, could afford, was at length drawn from the fervour of the cottage.[1]

[1] Tytler's Scotland. Hume's England. Abbé Mann's Flanders.

Art of Printing.

II. While the minds of men were thus warmed by the religious enthusiasm which was awakened, first by the Crusades, and subsequently by the Reformation, the Art of Printing, destined to change the face of the moral world, perpetuated the impres-

sions thus created, and widened the circle over which they extended. The spirit of religious freedom was no longer nourished only from the exhortations of the pulpit, or wrought upon in the fervour of secluded congregations; it breathed into the permanent exertions of human thought, and spread with the increasing wealth and enlarged desires of an opulent state of society. The discoveries of science, the charms of genius, may attract a few in every age; but it is by religious emotion that the great body of mankind are chiefly to be moved; and it was by the diffusion of its enthusiasm accordingly, that the greatest efforts of European liberty were sustained. But the diffusion of knowledge, by means of the press, is not destined to awake mere transient bursts of popular feeling; by imbuing the minds of those master spirits who direct human thought, it produces lasting impressions on society, and is perpetually renewed in the successive generations, who inhale, during the ardour of youth, the maxims and the spirit of classical freedom. The whole face of society has been modified by this mighty discovery; the causes of ancient decay seemed counteracted by new principles of life, derived from the multitudes, whose talents are brought to bear upon the fortunes of the state; and the influence of despotic power, shaken by the infusion of independent principles even into the armies which are destined to enforce its authority. But it is not unmixed good which has arisen from the diffusion of knowledge; if the principles of improvement have acquired

a hardier growth, those of evil have been more generally disseminated; the contests of society have grown in magnitude and increased in violence, and the passions of nations been brought into collision, instead of the ambition of individuals. In the progress of time, however, the most injurious elements in human affairs are gradually extinguished, while the causes of improvement are lasting in their effects; the contests of the Greek republics, the cruelty of the Athenian democracy, have long ceased to trouble the world; but the maxims of Grecian virtue, the works of Grecian genius, will permanently continue to elevate mankind. The turbulence, the insecurity, the convulsions to which the extension of knowledge to the lower orders has hitherto given rise, will in time be forgotten, but the improved fabric of society which it has induced, the increased vigour which it has communicated, may ultimately compensate all its evils, and permanently bless and improve the species.[1]

[1] Hume, vi. 100. Mign. Rév. Franç. i. 32.

Discovery of Gunpowder destroyed the Power of the Nobility.

III. But it would have been in vain that the influence of religion withered the bands of slavery, and the extension of knowledge enlarged the capacity of freemen, had no change occurred in the *arms*, by which the different classes of society combat each other. While the aristocracy of the country were permanently trained to combats, and the robber chivalry were incessantly occupied in devastation, the peaceable inhabitants of cities, the rude labourers of the fields, were unable to resist their attacks. With the

exception of the shepherds of the Alps, whose hardy habits early gave their infantry the firmness and discipline of veteran soldiers, the tumultuary levies of the people were every where crushed by the steel-clad bands of the feudal nobility. The insurrections of the commons, in France, of the peasants in the time of Richard II., in England, of the citizens of Ghent and Liege, in Flanders, and of the serfs in Germany, were all suppressed by the superior arms and steadier discipline of the rural chivalry. But with the discovery of GUNPOWDER, this decisive supremacy was destroyed; the feudal array, invincible to the spears or halberds of the peasantry, yielded to the terrible powers of artillery; defensive armour was abandoned from a sense of its insufficiency against these invisible assailants; the weight of the aristocracy destroyed by the experienced inability of its forces to combat the discipline which laborious industry could bring into the field. The wealth of Flanders in vain contended with the lances of France on the field of Resebecque; but the armies of Charles V. were baffled by the artillery of the United Provinces. The barons of Richard easily dispersed the rabble who followed the standard of Wat Tyler, but the fire of the English Yeomanry overthrew the squadrons of the Norman nobility at Marston-Moor. Fire-arms are the greatest of all levellers; like the hand of death, they prostrate equally the ranks of the poor and the array of princes. Wealth soon became essential to the prosecution of war, from the costly implements which

were brought into the field; industry, indispensable to success, from the rapid consumption of the instruments of destruction which attended the continuance of the contest.[c] By this momentous change new elements were brought into action, which completely altered the relative situations of the contending parties: Industry ceased to be defenceless, because it could purchase the means of protection; violence lost its ascendency, because it withered the sinews by which it was maintained.[1]

[1] Planta's Switzerland, i. 279. Sism. France, x. 533, 543. Hume, iii. 10. Bar. i. 295. Hal. ii. 131.

Increase of luxury tended to the same effect.

IV. The introduction of artificial wants, and the progress of luxury, completed the destruction of the feudal power. When the elegancies of life were comparatively unknown, and the barons lived in rural magnificence on their estates, the distribution of their wealth kept a multitude of retainers round their castles, who were always ready to support the authority from which they derived their subsistence; but by degrees the progress of opulence brought the nobility to the metropolis, the increase of luxury augmented their expenses, and from that moment their ascendency was at an end. When the landed proprietor squandered his wealth in the indulgence of artificial desires, and seldom visited the halls of his ancestors but to practise extortion upon his tenantry, his means of maintaining war were dissipated, and his influence over his people destroyed. Interest ceased to be a bond of union when no reciprocity of mutual services existed; affection gradually expired, from the absence of the objects on which it was to be exerted. The

power of the feudal nobility was long the object of apprehension, from the remembrance of its terrors in former times, after its real influence was dissolved. The importance of this change, like that of all others introduced by nature, was not perceived till its effects were manifested. The aristocracy of France was still the object of antiquated dread, when it stood on the brink of destruction; and the people were doubtful of their ability to resist its power, when it sunk without a struggle before the violence of its enemies.[1]

[1] Wealth of Nations, i. 345.

From the revival of letters in the commencement of the sixteenth century, and the dawn of the Reformation, these causes had been silently operating, and Time, the greatest of all innovators, was gradually changing the face of the moral world. The stubborn valour of the reformed religion had emancipated an industrious people from the yoke of Spain, and the stern fanaticism of the English Puritans had overthrown the power of the Norman nobility. The extension of knowledge had shaken the foundations of arbitrary power, and public opinion, even in the least enlightened countries, moderated the force of despotic sway. The worst governed states in Europe were constitutional monarchies compared to the dynasties of the East; and the oppression even of Russian severity was light in comparison of the cruelties of the Roman emperors. But it was not till the commencement of the French Revolution that the extent of the changes which had occurred was perceived, and the weakness of the arms of despotism

Combination of these Causes in inducing the French Revolution.

felt when brought in collision with the efforts of freedom. Standing armies had been considered as the most fatal discovery of sovereigns, and the history of former ages appealed to as illustrating their tendency to establish despotic authority; but the changes of time were wresting from the hands of tyranny even this dreaded weapon, and, in the next convulsion, it destroyed the power which had created it. The sagacity of the French monarchs had trained up these formidable bands as a counterpoise to the power of the aristocracy, and they had rendered the Crown independent of the control of the feudal barons; but a greater wisdom than that of Richelieu was preparing in their power and discipline the means of a total change of society. In vain the unfortunate Louis summoned his armies to the capital, and appealed to their chivalrous feelings against the violence of the people; the spirit of democracy had penetrated even the ranks of the veteran soldiers, and, with the revolt of the Guards, the throne of the French monarchy was destroyed.[1]

[1] Robertson's Charles V., i. 120. Comines, i. 384. Lac. Hist. de France, v. 82. Mign. 14.

It is this circumstance which has created so important a distinction between the progress of popular power in recent, and its fate in ancient times. Tyranny has every where prevailed, by arming one portion of the people against the other; and its chief reliance has hitherto been placed on the troops, whose interests were identified with its support. But the progress of information has destroyed the security of despotism, by dividing the affections of the armies

on which it depended; and the sovereigns of the military monarchies in Europe have now more to fear from the troops, whom they have formed to be the instruments of their will, than from the citizens whom they regarded as the objects of apprehension. The translation of the sword from the nobility to the throne, so long the subject of regret to the friends of freedom, has thus become an important step in the emancipation of mankind: War, amidst all its horrors, has contributed to the communication of knowledge and the dispelling of prejudice; and power has ceased to be unassailable, because it has been transferred from a body whose interests are permanent, to one whose attachments yield to the changes of society.

The former history of the world is chiefly occupied with the struggles of freedom against bondage; the efforts of laborious industry to emancipate itself from the yoke of aristocratic power. Our sympathies are all with the oppressed, our fears lest the pristine servitude of the species should be re-established; but with the rise of the French Revolution, a new set of perils have been developed, and the historian finds himself overwhelmed with the constant survey of the terrible evils of democratic oppression. The causes which have been mentioned, have at length given such an extraordinary and irresistible weight to the popular party, that the danger now sets in from another quarter, and the tyranny which is to be apprehended, is not that of the few over the many, but of

the many over the few. The obvious risk now is, that the influence of knowledge, virtue, and worth, will be overwhelmed in the vehemence of popular ambition, or the turbulence of democratic power. This evil is of a far more acute and terrible kind than the severity of regal, or the weight of aristocratic oppression: In a few years, when fully developed, it destroys the whole frame of society, and extinguishes the very elements of freedom, by annihilating the classes whose intermixture is essential to its existence. It is beneath this fiery torrent that the civilized world is now passing; and all the efforts of philosophy are therefore required to observe its course, and mitigate its devastation. Happy if the historian can find, in the record of former suffering, aught to justify future hope, or in the errors of past inexperience the lessons of ultimate wisdom.

It is by slow degrees, and imperceptible additions, that all the great changes of nature are accomplished. Vegetation, commencing with lichens, swells to the riches and luxuriance of the forest; continents, the seat of empires, and the abode of millions, are formed by the deposit of innumerable rills; animal life, springing from the torpid vitality of shell-fish, rises to the energy and power of man. It is by similar steps, and as slow a progress, that the great fabric of society is formed. Regulated liberty, the chief spring of human improvement, is of the most tardy developement; ages elapse before it acquires any firm consistency; nations disappear during the contest for

its establishment. The continued observation of this important truth is fitted both to inspire hope and encourage moderation: hope, by showing how unceasing has been the progress of improvement through all the revolutions of the world; moderation, by demonstrating how vain and dangerous are all attempts to outstrip the march of nature, or confer upon one age the institutions or habits of another. The annals of the French Revolution, more than any other event in human affairs, are calculated to demonstrate these important truths; and by evincing in equally striking colours the irresistible growth of liberty, and the terrible evils of precipitate innovation, to impress moderation upon the rulers, and caution upon the agitators of mankind, and thus sever from the future progress of freedom those bloody triumphs by which its past history has been stained.

HISTORY OF EUROPE.

CHAPTER I.

COMPARATIVE PROGRESS OF FREEDOM IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND.

ARGUMENT.

Parallel of the French and English Revolution—Superior moderation and humanity of the latter—It arises from the extent of the freedom previously acquired by the English—Effects of the conquest of the Anglo-Saxons and Danes on the character of the people—Great results of the Norman Conquest—It produced the class of yeomanry, and the early struggles for liberty in the Island—Power of the Crown under the Norman Princes—Insular situation—Anglo-Saxon institutions—Decline of the feudal liberty—Revived by the spirit of Religious freedom and the Reformation—Cruelty of the Scotch and Irish civil wars, and of the English in wars of the Roses—Causes of the moderation and clemency of the Great Rebellion—Early situation of the French nation—The Champs de Mai—Deplorable situation of the native Gauls—Their courage first restored by the civil wars of the nobles—Origin of the boroughs—Great vassals of the Crown—Their sovereign privileges—Fatal effect of the want of a class of yeomanry—Consequences of the English wars—Insurrection of the Jacquerie—Extinction of the spirit of freedom by the military power of the Crown—The residence of the nobility at Paris, and power of the great feudatories—Effects of the standing army, and the military spirit and achievements of the country—Exclusive privileges of the nobility—Small progress of the Reformation—Extrication of the power of thought and the spirit of freedom by the influence of literature and philosophy—Causes of the savage character of the French Revolution—Beneficial effects of periods of suffering on national character, exemplified by the history of France and England.

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No events in history are more commonly considered parallel than the Great Rebellion in England and the French Revolution. None, with certain striking points of resemblance, are in reality more dissimilar to each other.

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In both, the crown was engaged in a contest with the people, which terminated fatally for the royal family. In both, the reigning monarch was brought to the scaffold, and the legislative authority overturned by military force. In both, the leader of the army mounted the throne, and a brief period of military despotism was succeeded by the restoration of the legitimate monarchs. So far the parallel holds good—in every other particular it fails.

Parallel of the French and English Revolutions.

In England the contest was carried on for many years, and with various success, between the crown and a large portion of the gentry on the one hand, and the cities and popular party on the other. In the single troop of dragoons commanded by Lord Barnard Stuart, were to be found a greater body of landed proprietors than in the whole members of the republican party, in both Houses of Parliament, who voted at the commencement of the war. In France the monarch yielded, almost without a struggle, to the encroachments of the people; and the only blood which was shed in civil war arose from the enthusiasm of the peasants in La Vendée, or the loyalty of the towns in the south of France, after the leaders of the royal party had withdrawn from the struggle. The great landholders and privileged classes, to the number of 70,000, abandoned the country; and the crown was ultimately overturned, and the monarch brought to the scaffold, by a faction in Paris, which a few thousand resolute men could at first have easily overcome, and who subsequently became irresistible only from their having been permitted to excite, through revolutionary measures, the cupidity of the lower orders over the whole country.[1]

[1] Lac. Pr. Hist. i. 246. Id. Hist. de France, ix. 230. Hume, vi. 505.

In proportion to the magnitude of the resistance opposed in England to the encroachments of the peo-

ple by the crown, the nobility, and the higher classes of the landed proprietors, was the moderation displayed by both sides in the use of victory, and the small quantity of blood which was shed upon the scaffold. With the exception of the monarch and a few of the leading characters in the aristocratic party, no individual during the great rebellion perished by the hands of the executioner; no proscriptions or massacres took place; the victors and the vanquished, after the termination of their strife, lived peaceably together under the republican government. In France no resistance whatever was offered by the government to the popular party. The sovereign was more pacifically inclined than any man in his dominions, and entertained a superstitious dread for the shedding of blood; the democrats triumphed, without the loss of a single life, over the throne, the church, and the landed proprietors; and yet their successes, from the very first, were stained by a degree of cruelty of which the previous history of the world affords no example.[1]

[1] Lac. vi. 132. Hume, vii. 76. Lingard, xi. 8. Toul. i. 145. Th. i. 80.

RELIGION, in the English Revolution, was the great instrument for moving mankind: Even in the reign of James I. the Puritans were the only sect who were zealously attached to freedom; and in every commotion which followed, the civil contests between the contending parties, were considered as altogether subordinate to their religious differences, not only by the actors on the scene, but the historians who recorded their proceedings. The pulpit was the fulcrum on which the whole efforts of the popular leaders rested, and the once venerable fabric of the English monarchy, to which so large a portion of its influential classes have in every age of its history been attached, yielded at last to the force of

CHAP. I. fanatical frenzy. In France, the influence of religion was all exerted on the other side: The peasants of La Vendée followed their pastors to battle, and deemed themselves secure of salvation when combating for the cross; while the Jacobins of Paris founded their influence on the ridicule of every species of devotion, and erected the altar of Reason on the ruins of the Christian faith. Nor was this irreligious fanaticism confined to the citizens of the metropolis: it pervaded equally every department of France where the republican principles were embraced, and every class of men who were attached to its fortunes. Every where the churches, during the Reign of Terror, were closed; the professors of religion dispossessed, and their rights overturned: And the first steps towards the restoration of a regular government, were the restoration of the temples which the whirlwind of anarchy had destroyed, and the revival of the faith which its fury had extinguished.[1]

[1] Larochejaquelein, 47. Scott's Napoleon, ii. 241. Carnot's Mémoires, 200. Rev. Mem. vol. xxxvii. Lac. Pr. Hist. i. 467.

Moderation displayed in the English civil wars.

The civil war in England was a contest between one portion of the community and the other; but a large part of the adherents of the Republican party were drawn from the higher classes of society, and the sons of the yeomanry filled the ranks of the iron and disciplined bands of Cromwell. No massacres or proscriptions took place; not a single manor house was burnt by the populace; none of the odious features of a servile war were to be seen. Notwithstanding the dangers run and the hardships suffered on both sides, the moderation of the victorious party was such as to call forth the commendation of the royal historian; and, with the exceptions of the death of the King, of Strafford, and Laud, few acts of unnecessary cruelty stained the triumph of the republican arms. In France, the storming of the Bastile was

the signal for a general dissolution of the bands of authority, and a universal invasion of private property; the peasantry on almost every estate, from the Channel to the Pyrenees, rose against their landlords, burnt their houses, and plundered their effects,—and the higher ranks in every part of the country, excepting La Vendée, and the royalist districts in its vicinity, were subjected to the most revolting cruelties. The French Revolution was not a contest between such of the rich and poor as maintained republican principles, and such of them as espoused the cause of the monarchy, but an universal insurrection of the lower orders against the higher. It was sufficient to put a man's life in danger, to expose his estate to confiscation, and his family to banishment, that he was, from any cause, elevated above the populace. The gifts of nature, destined to please or bless mankind, the splendour of genius, the powers of thought, the graces of beauty, were as fatal to their possessors as the adventitious advantages of fortune or the invidious distinctions of rank. "Liberty and Equality" was the universal cry of the revolutionary party. Their liberty consisted in the general spoliation of the opulent classes; their equality in the destruction of all who outshone them in talent, or exceeded them in acquirement.[1]

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[1] Hume, iv. 127, and vii. 76. Ling. xi. 8. Clarendon, vi. 551. Rivarol, 95, 96.

The English Revolution terminated in the establishment of the rights for which the popular party had contended, but the great features of the constitution remained unchanged; the law was administered on the old precedents even during the usurpation of Cromwell, and the great body of the people scarcely felt the important alteration which had been made in the government of the country. In France, the

CHAP. I. triumph of the popular party was followed by an immediate change of institutions, private rights, and laws; the nobility in a single night surrendered the whole privileges which they had inherited from their ancestors; the descent of property was turned into a different channel by the abolition of the rights of primogeniture, and the administration of justice between man and man, founded on a new code destined to survive the perishable empire of its author. Every thing in England remained the same after the Revolution, with the exception of the privileges which were confirmed to the people, and the pretensions which were abandoned by the crown. Every thing in France was altered, without the exception even of the dynasty that ultimately obtained the throne.[1]

[1] Ling. xi. 6. Rivarol, 139.

The great estates of England were little affected by the Revolution; the nobles, the landowners, and the yeomanry, alike retained their possessions, and, under a new form of government, the influence of property remained unchanged. With the exception of the lands belonging to the dignitaries of the church, which were put under a temporary sequestration, and of the estates of a few obnoxious cavaliers, who lost them by abandoning their country, no material alterations in property took place; and after the Restoration a compromise almost universally ensued, and the ancient landholders, by the payment of a moderate composition, regained their possessions. In France, on the other hand, the whole landed property of the church, and the greater part of that of the nobility, was confiscated during the Revolution, and such was the influence of the new proprietors, that the Bourbons were compelled, as the fundamental condition of their restoration, to guarantee the security of the revolu-

tionary estates. The effects of this difference have been in the highest degree important. The whole proprietors who live on the fruits of the soil in Great Britain and Ireland, at this moment, notwithstanding the prodigious increase of wealth which has since taken place, probably do not amount to 300,000, while above 3,000,000 heads of families, and 15,000,000 of persons, dependent on their labour, subsist on the wages they receive. In France, on the other hand, there are nearly four millions of proprietors, most of them in a state of great indigence, and above 14,000,000 of souls, constituting their families, independent of the wages of labour; being a greater number than the whole remainder of the community. In France, the proprietors are as numerous as the other members of the state; in England, they hardly amount to a tenth part of their number.[1]

[1] Baron de Staël, 54. Ling. xii. 20, 21. Mign. ii. 403. Colquhoun, 106, 107. Ganilh, 166, 208. Mémoires du Duc de Gaete, ii. 334.

The political influence of England since the Restoration has mainly rested in the great families. A majority in the House of Commons was long appointed by a certain number of the House of Lords, and experience has proved that, excepting in periods of uncommon national excitement, the ruling power in the state is to be found in the hands of the principal landed proprietors. In France, the Upper House is comparatively insignificant, a great proportion of its members derive their subsistence from the bounty of the crown, and the whole, neither directly nor indirectly, possess any serious weight in the constitution. The struggle bequeathed by the Revolution to succeeding ages, has from this cause become different in the two countries; in Britain, as in ancient Rome, it is between the patricians and the plebeians; in France, as in the dynasties of the East, between the crown and the people. This is the natural con-

CHAP. I. sequence of the maintenance of the aristocracy in the one country, and its destruction in the other; political weight in the end always centres where the greater part of the national property is to be found.

The military and naval power of England was not materially changed by the great rebellion. A greater degree of discipline, indeed, was established in its armies, and a more decided tone adopted by the government in its intercourse with foreign states; but the external relations of the monarchy remained the same; no permanent conquests were effected, and no alteration in the balance of European power resulted from its success. Within a few years after the Restoration, the English waged a doubtful maritime war with the smallest state in Europe, and the mistress of the seas was compelled to submit to humiliation from the fleets of an inconsiderable republic. In France, on the other hand, the first burst of popular fury was immediately followed by an ardent and universal passion for arms; the neighbouring states soon yielded to the vigour of the revolutionary forces, and Europe was shaken to its foundations by the conquests which they achieved. The ancient balance of power has been permanently destroyed by the consequences of their exertions; at first by the overwhelming influence which they gave to the arms of France, at last by the ascendency acquired by the powers who subdued them.

Discrepancies so great, consequences so various, cannot be explained by any reference to the distinctions of national character, or of the circumstances under which liberty arose in the two countries. There is certainly a material difference between the character of the French and that of the English, but not such a difference as to render the one revolution,

bloodless save in the field, the other bloody in all but the sovereign; the one destructive to feudal power, the other confirmative of aristocratic ascendency; the one subversive of order and religion, the other dependent on the attachments which they had created. There is a difference between the circumstances of the two countries at the period when their respective revolutions arose, but not such as to make the contest in the one the foundation of a new distribution of property, and a different balance of power,—the other the chief means of maintaining the subsisting interests of society, and the existing equilibrium in the world.

The insurrection of slaves is the most dreadful of all commotions; the West India negroes exterminate by fire and sword the property and lives of their masters. Universally the strength of the reaction is proportioned to the oppression of the weight which is thrown off; the recoil is most to be feared when the bow has been farthest bent from its natural form. Fear is the real source of cruelty; men massacre others because they are apprehensive of death themselves. Property is set at nought where the aggressors have nothing to lose; it is respected when the gaining party have grown up under the influence of its attachments. Revolutions are comparatively bloodless when the influential classes guide the movements of the people, and sedulously abstain from exciting their passions; they are the most terrible of all contests, when property is arrayed on the one side and numbers on the other. The slaves of St Domingo exceeded the horrors of the Parisian populace; the American revolution differed but little from the usages of civilized war. These principles are universally recognised; the difficulty consists in disco-

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vering what causes brought the one set to operate in the English, the other in the French Revolution.

These causes are to be found in the former history of the two countries; and a rapid survey of their different circumstances will best show the different character which was stamped upon the two contests by the previous acquisitions or losses of their forefathers.

Arises from freedom previously gained by the English.

The vast extent of the Roman empire gave centuries of repose to the inhabitants of its central provinces. Wars were carried on on the frontier alone; and the legions, chiefly recruited by mercenary bands drawn from the semi-barbarous states on the verge of the imperial dominions, presented scarcely any resemblance to the legions which had given to the Republic the empire of the world. The emperors, departing from the generous maxims of the republican government, oppressed the subject provinces by the most arbitrary exactions, and seldom allowed their inhabitants to hold any official situation, or participate in any important respect in the powers of government. The ignorance which universally prevailed was almost as great as that of England in the time of Alfred, when not a clergyman to the south of the Thames could read. From the long continuance of these circumstances during many successive generations, the spirit of the people throughout the whole Roman empire was totally extinguished, and they became alike incapable of combating for their lives with the enemies of their country, or of contending for their liberties with the despots on the throne. The pusillanimity with which its inhabitants, during a series of ages, submitted to the spoliation of barbarous enemies, and the exactions of unbridled tyrants, would appear incredible,[1] were it not only sup-

[1] Gibbon, iii. 66, 67. Turner's Anglo-Saxons, i. 184, 188, & ii. 6, 8. Sism. France, i. 74, 77. Hume, i. 24.

ported by the concurring testimony of all historians, but found by experience to be the uniform attendant on a continued state of pacific enjoyment.

The British and the Gauls, at the period of the overthrow of the empire, were alike sunk in this state of political degradation. The inhabitants to the south of the wall of Severus were speedily overrun, upon the removal of the Roman legions, by the savages issuing from the recesses of Caledonia, and the British leaders bewailed in pathetic strains their inability to contend with an artless and contemptible enemy. Notwithstanding the extraordinary military talents of Ætius, the Gauls were soon overrun by their barbarous neighbours; and a small tribe, emerging from the centre of Germany, became permanent masters of the plains of France. The Anglo-Saxons gradually vanquished the helpless Britons, and gave its lasting appellation to the future mistress of the waves.[1]

[1] Sism. Hist. de France, i. 201. Hume, i. 26, 29.

These conquests in both countries were, as already noticed, attended in the end by a complete and violent change of landed property, and an immediate prostration of a considerable part of the vanquished people to the rank of slaves on the estates of their forefathers. This last and greatest humiliation, consequent upon a long train of political and military oppressions, completed the apathy and dejection of the great body of the people, and might have finally extinguished, as in the dynasties of the East, all desire of independence in their descendants, had not misfortunes arisen with their invigorating influence, and mankind regained in the school of adversity the spirit which they had lost in prosperous ages.[2]

See Introduction.

[2] Thierry, ii. 27. Turn. Anglo-Saxons, i. 37. Hume, i. 67.

The long and obstinate conflicts which the Anglo-Saxons had to maintain, first with the natives, and afterwards with each other, were the first cause which

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Effects of Anglo-Saxon and Danish conquests.

in the British isles revived the energy of the people. These wars were not the transient result of ambition or the strife of kings, conducted by regular armies, but the fierce contests of one race with another struggling for all that man holds dear—their lives, their religion, their language, and their possessions. For five long centuries the fields of England were incessantly drenched with blood; every county was in its turn the scene of mortal strife, and every tribe was successively driven by despair to manly exertion; until at length the effeminate character of the natives was completely changed, while their conquerors were prevented from sinking into the corruption, which in general rapidly follows success in barbarous times. The small divisions of the Saxon kingdoms, by producing incessant domestic warfare, and bringing home the necessity for courage to every cottager, eminently contributed in this way to the formation of the national character. Milton has said, that the wars of the Heptarchy were not more deserving of being recorded than the skirmishes of crows and kites. He would have been nearer the truth if he had said that they laid the original foundation of the English character.[1]

[1] Hume, i. 42, 97. Sism. France, i. 400, 401.

In this particular, as in many others, the insular situation of Britain eminently contributed to the formation of the national character. The other provinces of the Roman empire were overrun at once, because a vast and irresistible horde suddenly broke in upon them, which they had no means of resisting. The settlement of the Franks in Gaul, of the Visigoths in Spain, of the Vandals in Africa, and of the Goths, and afterwards the Lombards, in Italy, all took place in single generation. But the sea-girt shores of England could not be assailed by such a sudden and irre-

sistible irruption of enemies. "The blue-eyed myriads from the Baltic coast" arrived by slow degrees, in squadrons and small fleets, none of which appear to have conveyed at once above 6000 or 8000 men, most of them only 1000 or 1500. The people were thus encouraged to resist, by the inconsiderable number of enemies which made their appearance on any one occasion; and although fresh invaders incessantly appeared, yet they generally assailed different districts, in the hope of discovering hitherto untouched fields of plunder. The spirit of the nation was thus called forth, both by the variety of points which were assailed, and the encouragement to local resistance which arose from the prospect, and frequently the achievement of success: and the northern inundation, instead of being a flood which at once overwhelmed the vanquished people, and for centuries extinguished their energy, produced rather a perpetual strife, in the course of which the warlike virtues were regained which had been lost amidst the tranquillity of the Roman empire.[1]

[1] Mackintosh's England, i. 30.

The exposure of the English to the piratical incursions of the Danes perpetuated this martial spirit, after the union of the country into one monarchy might otherwise have threatened its extinction; and, by compelling the government for many generations to put arms into the hands of the great body of the people, whether Saxons or Britons, spread an independent feeling over the whole population. To resist these merciless invaders the whole strength of the kingdom was trained to the use of arms, and the earls of the counties summoned to their support every man within their bounds capable of wielding a halberd. By an ordinance of Alfred a regular militia was established throughout the realm, and it was enacted, that the whole people should be registered and armed.

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That great monarch fought no less than fifty-six battles in person with the invaders, and established at the same time the great rudiments of the English constitution, by the institution of courts of justice, trial by jury, and regular meetings of parliament.[1]

[1] Hume, i. 95, 96, 102, 103, 107.

The natural consequence of these circumstances, was the formation of a bold and independent character, not only among the landed proprietors, but the peasantry, upon whose support they daily depended for defence against a roving but indefatigable enemy. Accordingly, from the earliest times, the free tenants bore an important part among the Anglo-Saxons, and were considered as the companions, rather than the followers, of their chieftains. Like the *Comites* among the ancient Germans, they were the attendants of their leaders in peace, and their strength and protection in war. The infantry, in which the chiefs and their followers fought together, was, even before the Conquest, the chief strength of the English armies; while the cavalry, in whose ranks the nobles alone appeared, constituted the pride of the continental forces; and this difference was so material, that it appears to this day in the language of these different states. In all the states of the continent, the word *Chevalier* is derived from and means a *horseman;* while in England the corresponding word *knight,* has no reference to any distinction in the mode of fighting, but comes from the German *cnycht,* a young man or companion.[2]

[2] Thierry, i. 182; ii. 180. Tac. Mor. Germ. c. 13, 14.

But, notwithstanding the strong principles of freedom which the Saxons brought with them from their original seats in Germany, the causes which have proved fatal to its existence in so many other states were here in full operation, and would have destroyed all liberty in England, but for the occurrence which

is usually considered as the most calamitous in its history. The Saxons imported from the continent the usual distinction between freemen and slaves, and the number of the latter class augmented to a most fearful degree during the long wars of the Heptarchy, in which the prisoners were almost universally reduced to captivity. At the time of the Conquest, in consequence, the greater part of the land in the kingdom was cultivated by slaves, who constituted by far the most numerous class in the community; and the free tenants were extremely few in comparison. These slaves, in process of time, would have constituted the whole lower orders of the state; and the descendants of the freemen gradually dwindled into an aristocratical order. The greatest increase of mankind is always found in the lowest class of society; because it is in them that the principle of population is least restrained by prudential considerations; the higher orders, so far from multiplying, are never able, without additions from below, to maintain their own numbers. This is the fundamental principle which has rendered the maintenance of liberty for any long period so extremely difficult in all ages of the world. The descendants of the poor are continually increasing, while those of the middling or higher orders, are uniformly diminishing. 'The humblest class, having least political weight, are overlooked in the first struggles for freedom: the free citizens, who have acquired privileges, resist the extension of them to their inferiors: the descendants of the people in one age become the privileged order in the next; and on the basis of pristine liberty, aristocratic oppression is ultimately established.[1]

[1] Hume, i. 213, 216. Brady, Pref. 7, 9.

This change had already begun to operate in this island; the descendants of the first Anglo-Saxon set-

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tlers had already become a distinct class of nobles; the unhappy race of slaves had immensely multiplied; and, notwithstanding its original principles of freedom, the Anglo-Saxon constitution had become extremely aristocratical. No middle class was recognised in society; the peasants were all enrolled, for the sake of protection, under some chieftain whom they were bound to obey in preference even to the sovereign; and the industrious classes were so extremely scanty, that York, the second city in the kingdom, contained only 1400 families. The freedom of the Anglo-Saxons, therefore, was fast running into aristocracy; and their descendants, like the hidalgos of Spain, or the nobility of France, might have been left in the enjoyment of ruinous exclusive privileges, when the current of events was altered, and they were forcibly blended with their inferiors by one of those catastrophes which seem destined by Providence to arrest the course of human degradation.—This event was the NORMAN CONQUEST.[1]

[1] Hume, i. 210, 219. Brady, 10.

Great effects of the Norman Conquest.

As this was the last of the great settlements which have taken place in modern Europe, so it was by far the most violent and oppressive. The first settlers in the provinces of the Roman empire, being ignorant of the use of wealth, and totally unacquainted with the luxuries of life, deemed themselves fortunately established when they obtained a part of the vanquished lands. But the needy adventurers who followed the standard of William, had already acquired expensive habits, their desires were insatiable, and to gratify their demands, almost the whole landed property of England was in a few years confiscated. Hardly any conquest since the fall of Rome has been so violent, or attended with such spoliation, contumely, and insult. The ancient Saxon proprietor

was frequently reduced to the rank of a serf on his paternal estate, and nourished in the meanest employments an inextinguishable hatred at his oppressor; maidens of the highest rank were compelled to take the veil, in order to preserve their persons from Norman violence; tortures of the most cruel kind invented to extort from the miserable people their hidden treasures. In the suppression of the great rebellion in the north of England, the most savage measures were put in force. A tract, eighty miles broad to the north of the Humber, was laid waste, and above an hundred thousand persons in consequence perished of famine; while in Hampshire, a district of country thirty miles in extent was depopulated, and the inhabitants expelled, without any compensation, to form a forest for the royal pleasure. Nor were these grievances merely the temporary effusion of hostile revenge; they formed, on the contrary, the settled maxims by which the government for centuries was regulated, and from which the successors of the Conqueror were driven by necessity alone. For several reigns, it was an invariable rule to admit no native of the island to any office of importance, ecclesiastical, civil, or military. In the reign of Henry I., all places of trust were still in the hands of the Normans; and so late as the beginning of the 12th century, the same arbitrary system of exclusion seems to have been rigidly enforced. The dispossessed proprietors sought in vain to regain their estates. An array of sixty thousand Norman horsemen was always ready to support the pretensions of the intruding barons. The throne is still filled by the descendants of the Conqueror, and the greatest families in the realm date their origin from the battle of Hastings.[1]

[1] Hume, i. 260, 279, 283, 284, 318. Thierry, ii. 24, 27, 96, 97, 286, 303, 304, 368. Guizot, Hist. Eur. ch. ii.

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The English antiquarians, alarmed at the consequences which might be deduced from this violent usurpation, have endeavoured to soften its features, and to represent the Norman as reigning rather by the consent than the subjugation of the Saxon inhabitants. In truth, however, it was the severity and continued weight of this conquest which was the real cause of the refractory spirit of the English people. The principles of liberty spread their roots the deeper, just because they were prevented from rising to the surface of society.[1]

[1] Blackstone, i. 27.

It produced the yeomanry of England.

The Saxon proprietors having been almost expelled, were necessarily cast down into the lower stations of life. A foundation was thus laid for a middling rank in society, totally different from what obtained in any other state in Europe. It was not the native inhabitants, the pusillanimous subjects of the Roman empire, who from that period composed the lower orders of the state, but the descendants of the free Anglo-Saxon and Danish settlers, who had acquired independent habits from the enjoyment of centuries of freedom, and courageous feelings from the recollections of long series of successes. One defeat could not extinguish the recollection of an hundred victories. Habits, the growth of ages, survived the oppression of transient sovereigns. The power of the Normans prevented them from rising into the higher stations in society; the slaves already filled the lowest walks of life. Between the two, they formed a sturdy and powerful body, which neither withered in the contests of feudal power, nor perished in the obscurity of ignoble bondage. It is from this cause that the *yeomanry of England* took their rise.

Had the kingdom of England been but an appendage to a monarchy of greater extent, the discontents

of this middling class would probably have been treated with contempt, or repressed by the stern hand of military power; and the Norman barons, residing in their castles in France, might have safely disregarded the impotent clamour of their English tenantry. But by a fortunate combination of circumstances, this was rendered impossible. The military chieftains who followed the Conqueror, were either possessed of no estates on the other side of the Channel, or their recent acquisitions greatly exceeded the value of their continental possessions. The kingdom of England was too powerful to be treated as an appendage of a Norman duchy; and the English tenantry too formidable to be resigned to the oppressive government of an absent nobility. Hence, both the sovereign and his nobles made England their principal residence, and the Norman nobility, who at first had flattered themselves that they had gained an appendage to their duchy, soon found, like the Scotch upon the accession of their monarchs to the English throne, that they had changed places with their supposed subjects, and that the province was become the ruling power.

The effects of this necessity soon appeared in the measures of government. At the accession of each successive monarch, in every crisis of national danger, it was deemed indispensable to make some sacrifice to the popular wishes, and abate a little of the wonted severity of the Norman rule, to secure the fidelity of their English subjects. When Henry I. came to the throne, his first step was to grant the famous charter, which was long referred to as the foundation of English liberties, in order to secure the support of his insular subjects against the preferable claims of his brother Robert; and, in consequence,

CHAP. I. he was enabled to lead a victorious army into Normandy, and revenge, on the field of Tenchebray, the slaughter and the calamities of Hastings. When Stephen seized the sceptre, he instantly passed a charter confirming the grants of Henry, and promising to remit the Danish tax, and restore the laws of Edward the Confessor. Henry II. deemed it prudent, in the most solemn manner, to ratify the same instrument. The pusillanimity and disasters of John led to the extortion of *Magna Charta*, by which the old charter of Henry I. was again confirmed, and the rights of all classes of freemen enlarged and established, and the great charter itself was ratified no less than two-and-thirty different times in the succeeding reigns, on occasion of every extraordinary grant from the subjects, or any unusual weakness of the crown.[1]

[1] Eadmer, 90. Hume, i. 328, 351; ii. 74, 81. W. Malmsbury, 179. M. Paris, 38, 272. Hallam, i. 452.

And the early struggles for freedom.

The effects of these circumstances on the character and objects of the English struggles for freedom, have been in the highest degree important. From perpetually recurring to the past, the habit was acquired of regarding liberty, not as a boon to be gained, but as a right to be vindicated; not as an invasion of the constitution, but a restoration of its pristine purity. The love of freedom came thus to be inseparably blended with the veneration for antiquity; the privileges of the people were sought for, not in the violation of present, but in the restitution of ancient right;—not in the work of destruction, but in that of preservation. The passion for liberty was thus divested of its most dangerous consequences, by being separated from the desire for innovation. The progress of the constitution was marked not by successive changes, but repeated confirmations of subsisting rights; and the effects of freedom in England, instead of being directed, as in most other countries, to pro-

cure an expansion of the rights of the people in proportion to the progress of society, have been almost entirely confined to an unceasing endeavour to prevent their contraction by the arbitrary disposition of succeeding monarchs.

The same circumstances produced a remarkable effect on the current of public feeling in England, and the objects which were regarded as the subject of national anxiety by the great body of the people. They mingled the recollection of their ancient laws with the days of their national independence, and looked back to the reign of Edward the Confessor, as the happy era when their rights and properties were secure, and they had not yet tasted of the severity of foreign dominion. Hence the struggles of freedom in England acquired a definite and practicable object, and, instead of being wasted in aspirations after visionary schemes, settled down into a strong and inextinguishable desire for the restoration of an order of things once actually established, and of which the experienced benefits were still engraved on the recollections of the people. For several centuries, accordingly, the continued effort of the English people was to obtain the restitution of their Saxon privileges;—they were solemnly recognised in *Magna Charta*, and ratified in the different confirmations of that solemn instrument; and they are still, after the lapse of a thousand years, looked back to with interest by historians, as the original foundations of English liberty.[1]

[1] Hallam, i. 451, 452. M. Paris, 272.

The effects of the same causes appeared in the most striking manner in the wars of the English for several centuries after the Norman conquest. Their neighbours, the French and the Scotch, brought into the field only the chivalry of the barons, and the spearmen of their serfs. No middling order was to be

CHAP. I.

found superior to the common billman or foot-soldier, but inferior to the mounted knight. But, in addition to these, the Plantagenet monarchs appeared at the head of a vast and skilful body of archers, a force peculiar to England, because it alone possessed the class from whom it could be formed. It was the Saxon outlaws, driven by despair into the numerous forests with which the country abounded, who first from necessity obtained a perfect mastery of this weapon. And accordingly, the graphic Novelist, with historic truth, makes Norman Richard the leader of English chivalry, and Robin Hood, the Prince of Saxon outlaws, the first of British marksmen. It was their descendants who swelled the ranks of the English yeomanry, and constituted a powerful body in war, formidable from their skill, their numbers, and their independent spirit. The bow continued for ages to be the favourite national weapon of the Saxons. They practised the art incessantly in their amusements, and regained, by its importance in the field of battle, their due weight in the government of their country. Not the Norman nobility, not the feudal retainers, gained the victories of Cressy and Poictiers, for they were fully matched in the ranks of France, but the yeomen who drew the bow with strong and steady arms, accustomed to its use in their native fields, and rendered fearless by personal competence and civil freedom.[1]

[1] Hallam, i. 75. Froissart, i. 16. Tytler's Scotland, ii. 439, 440. Sism. of France, xii. 51.

The Scotch government, whose armies had suffered so often from the English archers, in vain passed repeated acts to compel the formation of a similar force in their own country. All these measures proved ineffectual, because the yeomanry were awanting who filled the ranks of the bowmen in the English armies. The French kings endeavoured, by mercenary troops

drawn from the mountains of Genoa, to provide a match for the English archers; but the jealousy of their government, which prevented the middling orders from being allowed the use of arms, rendered all such attempts nugatory; and the English, in consequence, twice vanquished their greatest armies, and marched boldly through the country at the head of their Saxon yeomanry. Even after the cessation of hostilities between the two monarchies, the terrible English Bands ravaged with impunity the provinces of France; nor did they ever experience any considerable check till they approached the Swiss mountains, and encountered at the cemetery of Bâle, peasants as free, as sturdy, and as courageous as themselves.[1] CHAP. I.

[1] Planta's Switzerland, ii. 321. Tytler's Scotland, ii. 439. Sism. France, xii. 51. Barante, i. 80. Preface.

It was a singular combination of circumstances which rendered the middling ranks under the Norman princes so powerful, both in the military array of the state, and in the maintenance of their civil rights. The Norman conquest had laid the foundation of such a class, by dispossessing the numerous body of Saxon proprietors; but it was the subsequent necessities of the sovereigns and the nobles, arising from their insular situation and their frequent contests with each other, which compelled them to foster the Saxon troops, and avail themselves of that powerful force, which they found existing in such perfection among their native forests. Cut off by the ocean from their feudal brethren on the continent, surrounded by a numerous and warlike people, the barons perceived that, without the support of their yeomanry, they could neither maintain their struggles with the sovereign, nor ensure the possession of their estates. The privileges, therefore, of this class were anxiously attended to in all the renewals of the great

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charter; and their strength was carefully fostered as the main security both of the crown and the barons in their extensive and unsettled insular possessions. It is considered by William of Malmsbury as an especial work of Providence, that so great a people as the English should have given up all for lost after the destruction of so small an army as that which fought at Hastings; but it was precisely the magnitude of this disproportion which perpetuated and extended the freedom of the country. Had the Normans not succeeded, the free Saxons would have dwindled into a feudal aristocracy, and the peasantry of England been similar in their condition to the serfs of France; had an overwhelming power vanquished, it would have utterly crushed the conquered people, the Norman Conquest been similar in its effects to the subjugation of the neighbouring island, and the fields of England been now choked by the crowds and the wretchedness of Ireland. It was the conquest of the country by a force which, though formidable at first, became soon disproportioned to the strength of the subdued realm, which both created a middling class and secured its privileges; and, by blending the interests of the victor with those of the vanquished, at length engrafted the vigour of Norman enterprise on the steady spirit of English freedom.[1] *

[1] William of Malmsbury, 53. Hall. i. 449.

In this view, the loss of the continental provinces

* Long after these pages were written, I had the high satisfaction of finding that, unknown to myself, M. Guizot had about the same time adopted a similar view of the effects of the Norman Conquest, and illustrated it with the philosophical spirit and extensive research for which his historical works are so justly celebrated. See Guizot, *Essais sur l'Histoire de France*, p. 373–400. It is singular how frequently about the same period, the same ideas are suggested to different writers, in situations remote from each other, which never before occurred to those who have treated of the subject. It would appear that political seasons bring forth the same fruits in different parts of the world at the same time.

in the reign of King John, and the subsequent long wars between France and England under the Plantagenet princes, contributed strongly to the preservation of English liberty, by severing all connexion between the barons and their kinsmen on the continent, and throwing both the sovereigns and the nobility for their chief support upon the tenantry of their estates. From the commencement of these contests, accordingly, the distinction between Norman and English disappeared; the ancient prejudices and pride of the Normans yielded to the stronger feeling of antipathy at their common enemies; English became the ordinary language both of the higher and lower orders, and the English institutions the object of veneration to the descendants of the very conquerors who had overturned them. The continual want of money, which the long duration of this desperate struggle occasioned to the crown, strengthened the influence of English freedom; each successive grant by the barons was accompanied by a confirmation of ancient rights; the commons, from the constant use of arms, came to feel their own weight, and to assert their ancient privileges; and at length England, under the Plantagenet sovereigns, regained as much liberty as it had ever enjoyed under the rule of its Saxon monarchs.[1]

[1] Hume, ii. 487, 488, 492; iii. 4, 78, 79.

Three circumstances, connected with the Norman conquest, contributed in a remarkable manner to the preservation of a free spirit among the barons and commons of England.

1st. The first of these was the great weight which the crown acquired from the ample share of the conquered lands which were allotted to the sovereign at the conquest. William received no less than 1422 manors for his proportion; a patrimony far greater

Power of the Crown under Norman Kings.

CHAP. I. than was enjoyed by any sovereign of Europe at the same period. The consequence was that the turbulent spirit of the barons was far more effectually checked in this island than in the continental states; the monarch could generally crush by his sentence any obnoxious nobleman; his courts of justice extended their jurisdiction into every part of the kingdom; and the essential prerogatives of the crown, those of coining money and repressing private wars, were never, except in reigns of unusual weakness, usurped by the subjects. For a century and a half after the conquest, the authority of the Norman sovereigns was incomparably more extensive than that of any of the other monarchs who had settled on the ruins of the Roman empire. The industry and wealth of the commons was thus more completely protected in England than in the neighbouring kingdoms, where feudal violence, private wars, and incessant bloodshed, crushed the first efforts of laborious freedom; and the middling ranks, comparatively free from oppression, gradually grew in importance with the extension of their numbers, and the insensible increase of national opulence.[1]

[1] Hume, i. 353, 369; 371; ii. 73, 74. Hall. ii. 427. Lyttleton, ii. 288.

Insular situation.

2d. The second was the insular situation of the country, and its consequent exemption from the horrors of actual warfare. With the exception of a few incursions of the Scottish monarchs into the northern counties, which were transient in their operations and partial in their effects, England has hardly ever been the seat of foreign war since the conquest; and the southern counties, by far the most important both in riches and population, have not seen the fires of an enemy's camp for eight hundred years. Securely cradled in the waves, her industry has scarcely ever felt the devastating influence of

foreign conquest; her arms have often carried war into foreign states, but she has never suffered from its havoc in her own. Periods of foreign hostility have been known to her inhabitants only from the increased excitation of national feeling, or the quickened encouragement of domestic industry. The effects of this happy exemption from the peril of foreign invasion have been incalculable. It is during the dangers and the exigencies of war that military violence acquires its fatal ascendency; that industry is blighted by the destruction of its produce; labour deadened by the forfeiture of its hopes; pacific virtues extinguished by the insults which they suffer; warlike qualities developed by the eminence to which they lead. In every age the principles of liberty expand during the protection of peace, and are withered by the whirl and the agitation of war. If this truth has been experienced in our own times, when military devastation is comparatively limited, and industry universally diffused, what must have been its importance in a barbarous age, when the infant shoots of freedom were only beginning to appear, and could expand only under the shelter of baronial power? It is accordingly observed by all our historians, that the feudal institutions of England were far less military than those which obtained in the continental monarchies; that private wars were comparatively unknown, and that the armies of the kings were for the most part composed of levied troops, whose unbroken experience soon acquired a decided superiority over the feudal militia of their enemies.[1]

[1] Hallam, i. 479.

3d. The third circumstance was the fortunate limitation of the privileges of nobility to the eldest son of the family. That this was owing to the weight of the commons in the constitution, which prevented

Anglo-Saxon Institutions.

CHAP. I. the formation of a privileged class, and suffered the prerogatives of nobility to exist only in that member of the family who inherited the paternal estate, cannot be doubted; but there is no single circumstance which has contributed more to confer its long permanence, its regular improvement, and its inherent vigour on the English constitution. The descendants of the nobles were thus prevented from forming a caste, to whom, as in the continental monarchies, the exclusive right of filling certain situations was limited. The younger branches of the aristocracy, after a few generations, relapsed into the rank, and became identified with the interests, of the commons; and that pernicious separation of noble and plebeian, which has been the principal cause of the destruction of freedom in all the European states, was from the earliest times softened in this country. The nobility in the actual possession of their estates were too few in number to form an obnoxious body. Their relations, possessing no privileges above the commoners, ceased, after a few generations, either to be objects of envy to their inferiors, or to be identified in interest with the class from which they sprung; and thus the different ranks of society were blended together, by a link descending from the higher, and ultimately resting on the lower orders.[1]

[1] Hallam, i. 478.

But this freedom, though firmly established by the feudal constitutions, was limited to the classes for whose interest alone these constitutions appear to have been intended. The villains, or slaves, who still constituted the great body of the labouring population, were almost wholly unprotected. Even in Magna Charta, while the personal freedom of every free subject was provided for, the more numerous body of slaves were left to the mercy of their land-

lords, with the single stipulation that they should not be deprived of their implements of husbandry; and their emancipation, far from being the work of the barons, was accomplished by the efforts of the clergy and the progress of humanity in a subsequent age. General liberty, in our sense of the word, was unknown in England till after the Great Rebellion.[1] CHAP. I.

[1] Hume, iii. 301, 305. Hall. i. 447. Hume, ii. 83. Tytler, ii. 260.

In the reign of Richard II., the gradual progress of wealth, and the extraordinary excitation awakened among all ranks by the military glories and lucrative wars of Edward III., produced the first effervescence of the real democratical spirit. The insurrection of Wat Tyler, which was contemporaneous with the efforts of the Flemish burghers to emancipate their country from feudal tyranny, was a general movement of the lower classes; and, accordingly, it was directed not against the power of the crown, but the exclusive privileges of the nobility.

Democratic spirit in time of Richard II.

> "When Adam delved and Eve span,
> Where was then the gentleman?"

was the maxim on which they rested; a distich pointing to a struggle of a totally different kind from any yet known in modern Europe, and corresponding very nearly to the principles which, four centuries after, produced the French Revolution. But all the great changes of nature are gradual in their progress: the effects of sudden convulsions are as transient as the effervescence from which they spring. The insurrection of the peasants in England met with the same fate as the struggle of the Flemish democracy at Resebecque: the feudal array of the barons easily dispersed a rabble imperfectly armed, and wholly undisciplined. Their victory was fortunate for the progress of real liberty;—the triumph of the

CHAP. I. peasants must have been shortlived, and would have anticipated the horrors of a negro revolt. Ignorant, disunited men, drawn from humble employments, can never long remain at the head of affairs. After the fervour of the moment is over, they necessarily fall under the dominion, if not of their former masters, at least of tyrants of their own creating, and their ultimate condition is worse than the first. Centuries of peace and increasing wealth—the unceasing operation of a beneficent religion—the influence of printing and diffused knowledge—a more general distribution of property—a change in the implements of human destruction, were all required before a part even of the levelling principles then diffused among the English peasantry could be safely carried into practice.[1]

[1] Barante, i. 74, Pref. Hume, iii. 10, 11.

Wars of the Roses.

The power of the feudal aristocracy received a final blow from the wars of York and Lancaster. Those bloody dissensions destroyed the fabric of Gothic power—they watered the English plains with blood; but it was blood from which has arisen a harvest of glory. From causes which it is difficult now to trace, they early assumed a character of extraordinary ferocity. Prisoners of the highest rank, even on both sides, were, from the very commencement, massacred in cold blood; and at length the exasperation of the two parties became so excessive, that quarter was refused by common consent on the field of battle, and thirty-six thousand Britons fell by mutual slaughter in a single engagement. The chasm occasioned by these losses was soon repaired by the lower orders; but to the feudal nobility they proved completely fatal. Eighty princes of the blood, and almost the whole ancient barons, perished in these disastrous wars; and upon the termination of hostilities, the House of Peers could only muster forty members.

The influence of those who remained was immensely weakened. In the different forfeitures which had been inflicted with so unsparing a hand by the factions who alternately prevailed, the estates of almost all the nobility in the kingdom had been included; and the feudal tenants, accustomed to a rapid change of masters in the general confusion, lost great part of their ancient veneration for their superiors. The nobles became divided among each other; the remnants of the Norman conquerors viewed with undisguised jealousy the upstart families who had risen in the midst of the public distress; and they regarded with equal horror the remnant of ferocious barons, ever ready to exterminate them to regain their properties. Weakened in numbers, disunited among each other, and severed from the affections of the people, the ancient nobility of England were never again formidable to the liberties of their country.[1]

[1] Hallam, iii. 294, 295. Hume, iii. 203, 212, 215, 237.

Decline of feudal liberty.

The ultimate effects of this destruction of the feudal aristocracy were eminently favourable to public freedom; but its immediate consequence was a great and most perilous augmentation of the power of the crown. The ancient barrier was swept away, and the new one was not yet erected. By the forfeitures which accrued to the victorious monarch, a fifth of the whole land of the kingdom was annexed to the crown; and notwithstanding the liberal grants to the nobles of his party, the hereditary revenue which Edward left to his successors was very great. The influence of the nobles being in abeyance, and the people having neither acquired nor become capable of exerting any share of power, but through the medium of their superiors, nothing remained to resist the power of the sovereign. The inevitable consequence was the destruction of the freedom which had been won by

CHAP. I. the struggles of the barons; and hence the tyranny of the Tudor princes. Nothing, accordingly, is more remarkable than the pliant servility of Parliament, and the slavish submission of the people, during the reigns of the successors of Henry VII. Civil war appears to have worn out their energies and extinguished their ancient passion for freedom; the House of Peers and Commons vied with each other in acts of adulation to the reigning monarch; it seemed as if the barons of Runnymede had been succeeded by the senate of Tiberius. Even the commons appear to have totally lost their former spirit;—the most arbitrary taxation, the most repeated violations of their liberties, produced no popular convulsion; mandates issued from court were universally obeyed in the election of members of Parliament; and the most violent changes of which history makes mention, the destruction of the national religion, the seizure of one-third of the national property, the execution of seventy-two thousand persons in a single reign, produced no commotions among the people.[1]

[1] Hume, iv. 244, 275, 358, 399. Hallam, iii. 298.

Revived by spirit of religious freedom.

This was the critical period of English liberty: the country had reached that crisis which in all the great continental monarchies has proved fatal to public freedom. Notwithstanding her insular situation; notwithstanding the independent spirit of her Saxon ancestry; notwithstanding the efforts of her feudal nobility, the liberty of England was all but extinct when the enthusiasm of the REFORMATION fanned the dying spark, and kept alive, in a sect which soon became predominant, the declining flame of liberty. The Puritans were early distinguished by their zeal in the cause of freedom; during the imperious reign of Elizabeth they maintained in silence their inflexible

spirit, and so well was her government aware of the dangerous tendency of their principles, that they never were permitted during the reign of that sagacious princess to have the smallest share in state affairs. In the reign of James I. their number became greater, and their exertions in the cause of freedom more apparent; the first serious attacks on government were made through the pulpit, and the only persons in this, as in other countries at the same period, who made any exertions in favour of their liberties, were those who were animated with religious zeal. During the reign of Charles I. an universal frenzy seized the nation; an enthusiasm almost as general, and far more lasting than that of the Crusades, pervaded the middling and a large proportion of the higher ranks; and but for the strength of that feeling the Long Parliament would never have been able to withstand the exertions which, with their characteristic loyalty, the English gentlemen at that period made in defence of their sovereign. From whatever cause, says Cromwell, the civil war began, if religion was not the original source of discord, yet God soon brought it to that issue; and he constantly affirmed, that amidst the strife of battle, and the dangers of war, the reward to which he and his followers looked was freedom of conscience. It is of little moment whether the future protector and his military chieftains were or were not sincere in these professions; it is sufficient that such was the temper of the times that by no other means could they rouse the energies of the great body of the people. The effects of this spirit were not confined to this island or the period in which it arose; they extended to another hemisphere and a distant age;[1] and from the emigrants whom religious oppression drove to the

[1] Hume, v. 155, 183; vi. 48, 100, 117, 387, 445, Ling. xi. 360.

CHAP. I. forests of America, have sprung those powerful states who have tried amidst transatlantic plenty the doubtful experiment of democratic freedom.

But while the current of popular feeling was thus violent in favour of republican principles, the effect of ancient and fondly cherished national institutions strongly appeared, and the English reaped the benefit of the long struggle maintained through the feudal ages by their ancestors in the cause of freedom. Though the substance of liberty had fled during the arbitrary reigns of the Tudor princes, her shadow still remained; the popular attachment to ancient rights was still undecayed; the venerable forms of the constitution were yet unchanged, and on that foundation the new and broader liberties of the country were reared. But for this happy circumstance, the spirit of freedom which the Reformation awakened might have wasted itself, as in Scotland, in visionary and impracticable schemes, until the nation, worn out with speculations from which no real benefit could accrue, willingly returned to its pristine servitude. Whereas, by the course of events which had preceded it, the stream of liberty naturally returned, when strengthened, into its wonted though now almost neglected channels, and, without breaking its former bounds, or overwhelming the ancient landmarks, extended its fertilizing influence over a wider surface.

Regard to ancient rights in England.

"It is remarkable," says Turgot, "that while England is the country in the world where public freedom has longest subsisted, and political institutions are most the subject of discussion, it is at the same time the one in which innovations are with most difficulty introduced, and where the most obstinate resistance is made to undoubted improvements. You might alter the whole political frame of government in

France with more facility than you could introduce the most insignificant change into the customs or fashions of England."[1] The principle here alluded to is at once the consequence and the reward of free institutions. Universally it will be found that the attachment of men to the customs and usages of their forefathers is greatest, where they have had the largest share in the establishment or enjoyment of them; and that the danger of innovation is most to be feared where the exercise of rights has been unknown to the people. The dynasties of the East are of ephemeral duration, but the customs of the Swiss democracies seem as immovable as the mountains in which they were cradled.* The same principles have in every age formed the distinguishing characteristic of the English people. During the severities and oppression of the Norman rule, it was to the equal laws of the Saxon reigns that they looked back with a fond affection, which neither the uncertainty of oral tradition, nor the intensity of present suffering, had been able to destroy. When the barons assembled in open rebellion at Runnymede, it was not any imaginary system of government which they established, but the old and consuetudinary laws of Edward the Confessor, which they moulded into a new form, and established on a firmer basis in the great Charter;

[1] Turgot, ii. 32.

* The French Directory, in the ardour of their innovations, proposed to the peasants of Uri and Unterwalden a change in their constitution, and made the offer of fraternization, which had seduced the allegiance of so many other states. But these sturdy mountaineers replied, "Words cannot express, citizen directors, the profound grief which the proposal to accede to the new Helvetic league has occasioned in these valleys. Other people may have different inclinations; but we, the descendants of William Tell, who have preserved without the slightest alteration the constitution which he has left us, have but one unanimous wish, that of living under the government which Providence and the courage of our ancestors have left us." [2]

[2] Lac. Rév. Franç. iii. 162.

CHAP. I. tempering even in a moment of revolutionary triumph the ardour of liberty and the pride of descent by their hereditary attachment to old institutions. The memorable reply of the barons to the proposal of the prelates at Mertoun, *Nolumus leges Angliæ mutare*, has passed into a consuetudinary rule, to which the preservation of the constitution through all the convulsions of later times is mainly to be ascribed. In the petition of right drawn by Selden, and the greatest lawyers of his day, the Parliament said to the king, "Your subjects have *inherited* this freedom;" and in the preamble of the Declaration of Rights, the states do not pretend any right to frame a government for themselves, but strive only to secure the religion, laws, and liberties, long possessed, and lately endangered; and their prayer is only, "That it may be declared and enacted, that all and singular, the rights and liberties asserted and declared, are the true ancient and indubitable rights and liberties of the people of this kingdom."[1] "By adhering in this manner," says Burke, "to our forefathers, we are guided, not by the superstition of antiquarians, but the spirit of philosophic analogy. In this choice of inheritance we have given to our frame of policy the image of a relation in blood, binding up the constitution of our country with our dearest domestic ties, adopting our fundamental laws into the bosom of our family affections; keeping inseparable, and cherishing with the warmth of all their combined and mutually reflected charities, our state, our hearths, our sepulchres, and our altars."[2]

[1] Wm. and Mary, c. 1.

[2] Planta's Switzerland, ii. 137. Hume, ii. 89, 141, 223. Burke, vi. 76, 80.

Extend to America.

These principles have not been abandoned by the descendants of England in their transatlantic possessions. When the Americans threw off the yoke of Britain, they retained its laws, its religion, its institu-

tions; no massacres or proscriptions, no confiscations or exiles, disgraced the rise of their liberty; no oblivion of the past was made the foundation of their hopes for the future. The English Church is still the prevailing religion of the land; the English decisions still regulate their courts of justice; and English institutions form the basis on which their national prosperity has been reared. Amidst the exasperation of a civil war, they have never deviated from the usages of civilized life. Alone of all foreigners, an Englishman still feels at home when he crosses the Atlantic; and the first efforts of American eloquence have been exerted in painting the feelings of an ingenuous inhabitant of that country, when he first visited the land of his fathers.[1]

[1] Sketch Book, i. 19.

As the best proof that the Revolution of England owed its distinctive character to the circumstances which preceded it, and to the large share enjoyed by previous generations in the government of the country, it is sufficient to refer to what took place at the same period in the sister kingdoms. Ireland, conquered by Henry II., was retained for four centuries in a state of feudal subjection to Britain; none of the privileges of English subjects had been communicated to her inhabitants; they had neither tasted of the severity of Saxon conquest, nor the blessings of Saxon freedom. Feudal aristocracy, in its worst form, accompanied by national exasperation, and an absent nobility, there prevailed; and what was the consequence? Instead of the moderate reforms, the humane conquests, and the security to property, which distinguished the English Rebellion, there appeared the most terrible horrors of popular licentiousness, and the last severities of military execution,—general massacres, the burning of families, torrents of blood,

Savage civil wars in Ireland.

CHAP. I. both in the field and on the scaffold, the storming of cities, and the desolation of provinces. Cromwell seriously endeavoured to extirpate the native Irish Catholics, though they were eight times as numerous as the Protestants; 40,000 men were sent as soldiers to foreign states, and their wives and children hurried off to the plantations; the most severe and arbitrary laws enforced against those who remained in the country; the estates of all who had borne arms against the Parliament were forfeited, and one-third cut off of all those proprietors who had not served in the popular ranks; a large portion of the people were moved from one part of the country to another, and any transplanted Irishman, found out of his district, might be put to death by the first person who met him. Such was the effect of these measures, that nearly one-half of the whole land in the country, amounting to above seven millions of acres, was forfeited, and bestowed on the Revolutionary soldiers; and even after the Restoration of Charles, two-thirds of these immense possessions were left in the hands of the recent acquirers, and though the remainder was nominally restored to the Catholics, none of it returned to the dispossessed proprietors.[1]

[1] Lingard, xi. 136; xii. 74, Hume, i. 379. Laing's Scotland, iii. 218, 219.

In Scotland, also, at the same period, the struggle for freedom was marked by all the horrors of popular licentiousness. In that remote state, neither the Saxon institutions, nor the principles of freedom, had obtained any solid footing; and in consequence, the nobles and peasantry, without either the intervention of a middling rank, or the moderating influence of previous privileges, were brought into fierce collision at the Reformation. As might have been expected, the proceedings of the Revolutionists were from the very first characterised by the utmost violence and

And Scotland.

injustice; the whole property of the Church, amounting to about a third of the kingdom, was confiscated and bestowed on the barons of the popular party; blood flowed in torrents on the scaffold; quarter was almost invariably refused in the field; and the proceedings of the adverse parties resembled rather the sanguinary vengeance of savages, than the conduct of men contending for important civil privileges. The mild and humane conduct of the Civil War in England forms the most striking contrast to the cruelty of the Royalists, or the severity of the Covenanters in Scotland. The horrors of the La Vendée insurrection were anticipated in the massacres of Montrose's followers; and the *Noyades* of the Loire are not without a parallel in the atrocious revenge of the popular faction.[1]

[1] Chambers' Revolutions, 1642, ii. p. 137. Laing, iii. 329, 330, 355, 448.

Nor was it any peculiarity in the national character which stamped its singular and honourable features on the English Rebellion. The civil wars of York and Lancaster, not a century and a half before, had been distinguished by a degree of ferocious cruelty to which a parallel is hardly to be found even in the terrific annals of the French Revolution; prisoners of every rank were uniformly massacred in cold blood after the action was over; a leader of one of the factions did not scruple to murder with his own hands the youthful prince, whom fortune had placed in his power; and the savage orders to give no quarter, which the French revolutionary government issued to their armies, but the humanity of its commanders refused to execute, were deliberately acted upon, for a course of years, by bodies of Englishmen upon each other.[2]

[2] Lac. Pr. Hist. ii. 58. Hume, iii. 203, 210. Laing, iii. 355.

The humane and temperate spirit of the English Rebellion, must therefore be ascribed to the circum-

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Causes of humanity of Great Rebellion.

stances in which the contest began in that country,—the rights previously acquired, the privileges long exercised, the attachments descending from a remote age, the moderation flowing from the possession of freedom. It was disgraced by no violent innovations, because it arose among a people attached by long habit to old institutions. It was followed by no proscriptions, because it was headed by the greater part of the intelligence of the state, and not abandoned to the passions of the populace. It was distinguished by singular moderation in the use of power, because it was conducted by men to whom its exercise had long been habitual; it was attended by little confiscation of property, because among its ranks were to be found a large portion of the wealth of the kingdom. The remarkable moderation of public opinion, which has ever since distinguished this country from the neighbouring states, and attracted equal attention among foreigners[1] as ourselves,[2] has arisen from the continued operation of the same circumstances.

[1] Lac. Hist. de France, viii. 39.
[2] Robertson's Scotland, iii. 182. Burke, vi. 80.

The importance of these circumstances will best be appreciated, and their application to the French Revolution understood, by reviewing the past history of that country.

Early state of Gauls.

Like the other provinces of the Roman empire, Gaul, upon the irruption of the barbarous nations, was sunk in the lowest stage of effeminacy and degradation. So early as the time of Tacitus, the decay in the military courage of the people had become conspicuous; and before the fall of the empire, it was found to be impossible to recruit the legions among its enervated inhabitants. Slavery, like a cancer, had consumed the vitals of the state; patrician wealth had absorbed plebeian industry; the race

of independent freemen had disappeared, and in their room had sprung up a swarm of ignoble dependents upon absent proprietors. These miserable inhabitants were oppressed to the greatest degree by the Roman governors; they were rigidly excluded from every office of trust, civil or military. The whole freemen in the province only amounted to 500,000 men; and the capitation-tax, in the time of Constantine, is said to have amounted to the enormous sum of nine pounds sterling for each free citizen. Under this iron despotism, population in the provinces rapidly declined; the slaves went off with every invader, and swelled the ranks of the northern conquerors; and while the numbers of the people steadily increased among the free inhabitants of the German forests, the human race was fast disappearing in the opulent provinces of the Roman empire.[1]

[1] Tac. Vit. Agric. c. ii. Gib. i. 82, 83; iii. 65, 66. Turner, i. 188, Anglo-Saxons. Sism. i. 69, 74, 77, 84, 89, 108.

National character, as might easily have been anticipated, rapidly declined under the combined influence of these degrading circumstances. The inhabitants of Gaul were considered by the northern nations, in the sixth century, as uniting all the vices of human nature—the cruelty of barbarians with the cowardice of opulence—the cringing of slaves with the arrogance of tyrants—the falsehood of civilized with the brutality of savage life. They could apply no stronger epithet of contumely on an enemy, than to call him a Roman.[2]

[2] Luitprand, ii. 481. Gibbon, ix. 143.

When the barbarians, at the close of the fourth century, broke in on all sides upon the Western Empire, they found the whole land in the hands of a few great families, who cultivated their ample possessions by means of slaves. The province of Gaul was no exception to this deplorable state, the natural and

Conquest by the Franks.

CHAP. I. miserable termination of corrupted opulence. Their barbarian conquerors, however, did not at once seize the whole of the vanquished lands: The Burgundians and Visigoths took two-thirds of their respective conquests; and although the proportion seized by the Franks is not distinctly mentioned, it is evident that they occupied the largest portion of the lands of Gaul. The lands left in the hands of the Roman proprietors were termed *allodial*, which, for a considerable time, were distinguishable from the military estates by which they were surrounded; but the depressed condition of the ancient inhabitants is abundantly proved by the fact, that the fine for the death of a common Frank was fixed at 200 solidi, and that of a Roman proprietor at 100. By degrees the distinction between barbarian and Roman became still more marked; the allodial properties were gradually either seized by the military chieftains in their neighbourhood, or ranked, for the sake of security, under their protection; the feeble descendants of the corrupted empire yielded to the energetic efforts of barbarian independence, and by the eleventh century the revolution in the landed property was complete, except in the southern provinces, and the name of Gaul merged in that of France.[1]

[1] Hallam, i. 144, 147, 149, 168. Leges Salicae, c. 58. Sism. France, i. 82, 83. Gib. v. 263. Guizot, Hist. de France, 72, 100.

Independent spirit of the Franks.

The military followers of Clovis, like all the other German tribes, were strongly attached to the principles of freedom. They respected his military talents, and willingly followed his victorious standard; but they considered themselves as his equals rather than his subjects, and were not afraid to dare his resentment, when the period of military command was over. When the spoil was divided at Soissons, Clovis begged that a particular vase might be set aside for his use.

The army having expressed their acquiescence, a single soldier exclaimed, "You shall have nothing here but what falls to your share by lot," and struck the precious vessel with his battle-axe. The conquest of Gaul spread these independent warriors, who did not exceed many thousands in number, over the ample provinces of that extensive country; and their annual assemblies in spring gave rise to the celebrated *Champs de Mai*, long revered as the rudiments of French liberty. But the difficulty of assembling a body so widely dispersed was soon severely felt; the new proprietors early became occupied by the interests of their separate estates, and disliked the burdensome attendance in the convocations; the monarchs ceased to summon their unwilling followers; and the successors of Clovis gradually freed themselves from all dependence on the ancient founders of their monarchy.[1]

[1] Du Bos, Hist. Critiq. ii. 301. Hallam, i. 153, 155.

The power of the monarch, however, in barbarous ages, can be rendered paramount only by the possession of great military qualities: the ease and luxury of a court rapidly extinguish the vigour which is requisite for its maintenance. The mayors of the palace soon usurped the royal authority; and a succession of monarchs, distinguished by the emphatic name of Rois Fainéans, rendered the sovereign contemptible even in the eyes of a degenerate people. The victories of Charles Martel, the genius of Charlemagne, for a time averted the degradation of the throne; but with their exertions the royal authority declined;[2] the great proprietors every where usurped the prerogatives of the crown, and France was divided into a number of separate principalities, each in a great measure independent of its neighbour, and

Rois Fainéans.

[2] Hallam, i. 31, 156.

CHAP. I. waging war and administering justice of its own authority.

Corruption of Empire of Charlemagne.

Nothing is more remarkable than the rapid and early degeneracy of barbarous states. No sooner are they settled on the vanquished lands, than they adopt the vices, and sink into the effeminacy of their subjects; the energy of the barbarian character is lost with the necessity which created it; and the descendants of the conquerors cannot, in a few generations, be distinguished from those of the vanquished people. This truth was signally exemplified in the early history of the French monarchy. Even during the reign of Charlemagne, the inherent weakness of a barbarous age was perceptible; all the splendour of his talents, all the experience of his armies, could only throw a temporary lustre over his empire; the efforts of a few thousand freemen were lost amidst the degradation of many millions of slaves; and the conqueror of the Western World had the mortification, before his death, of perceiving the rapid progress of the decay which was so soon destined to prostrate his empire. It is public freedom and general intelligence alone which can enable the human race to withstand the influence of too rapid prosperity; which can long continue in ages of civilisation the energy and courage of barbarous times; and by providing for the incessant elevation of those classes who have been bred under the discipline of adversity, furnish a more durable antidote to the growing depravity of prosperous times.[1]

[1] Sism. France, i. 400, 401; ii. 279. Conde, ii. 125.

Its dissolution.

The weakness of the empire at once appeared upon the death of the victorious monarch. Instantly, as if by enchantment, the fabric fell to pieces; separated into detached dominions, all means of mutual support

were lost, and pusillanimous millions yielded almost without a struggle to the ravages of contemptible enemies. The Normans, the Huns, the Saracens, pressed the different frontiers; a swarm of savage barbarians overspread the plains of Germany, and threatened the total extirpation of the inhabitants; the Northmen ascended every navigable stream, and from their shallow boats spread flames and devastation through the interior of France. Rich and poor were alike incapable of exerting themselves to avert the common calamity; villages were burnt, captives carried off, castles destroyed in every province, without the slightest effort at resistance; and while the unconquered tribes of Germany boldly united, under Otho, to drive back the terrible scourge of the Hungarian horse, the degenerate inhabitants of the Roman provinces were unable to repel the detached inroads of the Norman pirates.[1]

[1] Hallam, i. 25. Sism. iii. 96, 97, 123, 168, 170, 255, 276.

Private Wars of Nobles.

The first circumstance which restored the military courage of the inhabitants of France, after the decline of the dynasty of Charlemagne, was the private wars of the nobles, and the universal fortification of the castles, arising from the weakness of the throne. It is thus that the greatest human evils correct themselves, and that the excess of misery ultimately occasions its alleviation. Deprived of any thing like support from the government, and driven to their own resources for protection, the landed proprietors were compelled to arm their followers, and strengthen their castles, now become their only refuge. Military skill was restored with the use of arms; courage revived from confidence in its defences; a race of men arose inured to war from their infancy, and strong in the conciousness of superior prowess. In the interior of the castles, arms were the only

CHAP. I. employment, and the recounting of military exploits the sole amusement of the age; the words *chivalry* and *courtesy*, still attest the virtues which were learned by the mounted knights, and which were considered peculiar to those who had been bred up in the *courts* of the barons. The wretchedness and suffering of those ages have produced the most dignified features of modern manners. From the degraded followers of the Carlovingian kings, have sprung the heroic nobility of France; from centuries of war and rapine, the generous courage of modern warfare; from the dissolution of regal authority, the pride and independence of feudal nobility.[1]

[1] Sism. iii. 375, 451.

But it was only the nobles or landed proprietors who were renovated by these intestine divisions; the serfs who cultivated the ground, the burgesses who frequented the towns, were retained in the most degraded and abject state; the Franks lived in their castles, surrounded by their armed followers, in solitary independence; the Gauls, unarmed and unprotected, toiled in the fields, alike exposed to rapine, and incapable of resistance. The jealousy of their superiors denied them the use of arms; the fatal superiority of the knights, in actual warfare, rendered revolt hopeless: frequently, during the eleventh century, the miseries of the peasantry drove them to extremities, and led to bloody contests with the nobles; but in no one instance were they successful; and they returned to their ploughs, depressed by suffering, or disheartened by defeat.[2]

[2] Thierry, i. 161, 169, 170.

Rise of the Boroughs.

The first ray which broke in upon the gloom of the middle ages, on the continent of Europe, came from the Boroughs,—"an execrable institution," say the old historians, "by which slaves are encouraged to become free, and forget the allegiance they owe to

their masters." The first corporation in France arose about half a century after the English conquest, and "they were brought into general use by Louis the Fat, to serve as a counterpoise to the power of the nobles. Rouen and Falain, the first incorporated boroughs of Normandy, enjoyed their privileges by a grant from Philip Augustus, about the year 1267. Prior to that time the states of the duchy were composed entirely of nobles and clergy. The kings, however, early sensible of the importance of these communities as a bulwark against the encroachments of the nobles, procured a law, by which, if a slave escaped from his master, and bought a house in a borough, and lived there a year without being reclaimed, he gained his freedom,—a custom which seems to have prevailed equally in France, Scotland, and England. From this cause, joined to the natural influence of mutual protection and extended intercourse, boroughs every where became the cradles of freedom, although the nobles still looked upon them with such contempt, that, by the feudal law, the superior was debarred from marrying his female ward to a *burgess* or *villain*. But, notwithstanding their growing importance, the boroughs were incapable of offering any effectual resistance, for many ages, to the power of the nobles, from their want of skill in the use of arms, to which their superiors were habituated, —a distinction of incalculable importance in an age when violence was universal, and nothing but the military profession held in any esteem.[1]

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[1] Hume, ii. 111, 112. Hollingshed, iii. 15. Ducange, voce Commune. Houard, Loix des Français, i. 238. Tytler, ii. 301. M'Pherson, i. 367.

The two circumstances which had mainly fostered the spirit of freedom in England, were the extraordinary power of the sovereign, and the independent spirit of the commoners, both the immediate consequence of the Norman Conquest. In France the re-

Great feudatories.

CHAP. I. verse of both these peculiarities took place; the dignity of the throne was lost in the ascendency of the nobles, and the spirit of the people extinguished by the grasp of feudal power. For a series of ages the monarchy of France was held together by the feeblest tenure: The Dukes of Normandy, the Counts of Toulouse, the Dukes of Burgundy, and the Dukes of Bretagne, resembled rather independent sovereigns than feudal vassals, and the real dominion of the throne, before the time of Louis XI., seldom extended beyond the vicinity of the capital. In moments of danger, when the great vassals assembled their retainers, the King of France could still muster a mighty host, but with the transitory alarm the forces of the monarchy melted away; the military vassals retired after the period of their service was expired, and the leader of a hundred thousand men was frequently baffled, after a campaign of a few weeks, by the garrison of an insignificant fortress.[1]

[1] Sism. vii. 112. Bar. Introd. 42.

Want of yeomanry.

But the circumstance of all others the most prejudicial to the liberty of France, was the exclusive use of arms by the higher orders, and the total absence of that middling class in the armies, who constituted not less the strength of the English forces than the support of the English monarchy. Before the time of Charles VI., the jealousy of the nobles had never allowed the peasants to be instructed in the use of arms, in consequence of which they had no archers, or disciplined infantry, to oppose to their enemies, and were obliged to seek in the mountains of Genoa for cross-bowmen, to withstand the terrible yeomanry of England. The defeats of Cressy and Poictiers, of Morat and Granson, were the consequence of this inferiority; not that the natives of France were inferior in natural bravery to the English or the Swiss, but

that their armies, being composed entirely of the military tenants, had no force to oppose to the steady and experienced infantry, which in every age has formed the peculiar strength of a free people. Warned by these disasters, the French government, by an ordinance in 1394, ordered the peasantry throughout the whole country to be instructed in the use of the bow, and the pernicious practice of games of hazard to be exchanged for matches at archery. They made rapid progress in the new exercises, and would soon have rivalled the English bowmen; but the jealousy of the nobles took the alarm at the increasing energy of the lower orders. Martial exercises were prohibited, games of hazard re-established, the people lost their courage, from want of confidence in themselves, and the defeat of Azincour was the consequence.[1]

[1] Sism. xii. 51. Bar. i. 79; ii. 217.

The circumstances which first awakened the genuine democratic spirit in France, were the misery and anarchy arising from the English wars. During these disastrous contests, in which the French armies were so frequently worsted, and military license, with all its horrors, for above a century wasted the heart of the country, the power of the nobles was for a time destroyed, and the extremities of distress roused the courage of the peasantry. Abandoned by their natural protectors, pillaged by bands of licentious soldiers, driven to desperation by suffering, and excited by the prospect of general plunder, the populace every where flew to arms, and the insurrection of the *Jacquerie* anticipated the horrors of the French Revolution. The effect of the despotic government of preceding ages became then conspicuous: Unlike the moderate reforms of the English barons, who themselves contended for freedom, the French peasantry fell at once into the horrors of popular licen-

Misery arising from English wars.

CHAP. I.

tiousness. The features, the well-known features of servile war, appeared; the gentry, hated for their tyranny, were every where exposed to the violence of popular rage; and instead of meeting with the regard due to their past dignity, became on that account only the object of more wanton insult to the peasantry. They were hunted like wild beasts, and put to the sword without mercy; their castles consumed by fire; their wives and daughters ravished or murdered; and the savages proceeded so far as to impale their enemies, and roast them alive over a slow fire. But these efforts were as impotent as they were ferocious. The nobles combined for their common defence; the peasantry, unacquainted with arms, and destitute of discipline, could not withstand the shock of the feudal cavalry; and the licentiousness of the people was repressed, after one-half of the population of France had fallen a prey to the sword, or the pestilence which followed the wars of Edward the Third.[1]

[1] Froissart, c. 182, 183, 184. Sism. France, x. 543, 548; xi. 60. Hume, ii. 463.

Effects of the suffering of English Wars.

The misery occasioned by these contests, however, excited a spirit which long survived the disasters in which it originated. Nations, like individuals, are frequently improved in the school of adversity; and if the causes of the greatest advances in our social condition are accurately investigated, they may often be traced back to those long periods of difficulty, when energy has arisen out of the extremity of disaster. Before the death of Edward the Third, the soldiers of France, from constant practice, had become superior to those of England; and the courage of the nation, debased by centuries of Roman servitude, was restored amidst the agonies of civil dissension. The spirit of freedom was communicated to the boroughs, the only refuge from insult,[2] which had greatly swelled

[2] Froissart, viii. 124. Sism. x. 549. Bar. i. 74.

in importance during the devastation of the country, and emanating from the opulent cities of Flanders, threatened the aristocracy both of France and England with destruction. CHAP. I.

The liberty of France and Flanders, to use a military expression, advanced with an oblique front; the wealthy cities of the Netherlands took the lead; Paris, Rouen, and Lyons, were next brought into action; and all the boroughs of the south of France were ready, at the first success, to join the bands of the confederates. The firmness of Ghent, and the victory of Bruges, roused the democratic spirit through all the adjoining kingdoms; the nobility of all Europe took the alarm, and the invasion of Flanders by the chivalry of France, was conducted on the same principles, and for the same object, as the invasion of France by the allies in 1793. But the period was not yet arrived when the citizens of towns could successfully contend with the forces of the aristocracy. In vain the burghers of Flanders routed their own barons, and with a force of 60,000 men besieged the nobles of their territory in Oudenarde. The steel-clad squadrons of the French gendarmerie pierced their serried bands, and the victory of Resebecque crushed the liberties of France for four centuries. The French municipal bodies, among whom the ferments had already begun, lost all hope when the burghers of Flanders were overthrown, and resigned themselves, without a struggle, to a fate, which, in the circumstances of the world, appeared inevitable. Twenty thousand armed citizens awaited the return of the victorious monarch into Paris; but the display of the burgher force came too late to protect public freedom;[1] their leaders were imprisoned and executed, and the erection of the Bastile in 1389 marked the

Rise of democratic spirit.

[1] Bar. i. 74, 295. Sism. xi. 397, 400, 407.

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CHAP. I.

commencement of a long period of servitude, which only its destruction in 1789 was intended to terminate.

The struggles of the people in France in the reign of Charles VI., like the Revolution four centuries after, were totally distinct, both in character and object, from the efforts of the English in support of their liberties. The Norman barons extorted the great charter at Runnymede; the French peasantry formed the insurrection of the Jacquerie; the French boroughs alone supported the confederacy of Ghent. In the one case the barons marched at the head of the popular class, and stipulated for themselves and their inferiors the privileges of freedom; in the other, the nobles generally joined the throne, and combined to suppress a spirit which threatened their exclusive privileges. Moderation and humanity distinguished the first; cruelty and exasperation disgraced the last. So early in the history of the two countries were their popular commotions marked by the character which has ever since distinguished them, and so strongly has the force of external circumstances impressed the same stamp upon the efforts of the people in the most remote ages.[1]

[1] Bar. i. 74, 295.

Various circumstances conspired after this period to check the growth of public freedom, and to preserve those high aristocratic powers in France which ultimately led to the Revolution.

Great Feudatories. Their effect.

I. The French monarchy, during the feudal ages, was rather a confederacy of separate states than a single government. The great vassals exercised all the real powers of sovereignty independent of any foreign control, those of coining money, waging private war, and judging exclusively in civil causes. They were exempt from all public tribute except the feudal aids, and subject to no general legislative

control. The consequences of this were in the highest degree important. No common necessity, the dread of no common enemy, compelled the great vassals to court the popular assistance, or arm their tenantry against the throne. The vast power which the Conquest gave to the crown in England at once curbed the turbulence of the barons, established one general law throughout the realm, and induced the nobles for their own support to arm the yeomanry. The weakness of the throne in France enabled the great vassals to usurp the powers of sovereignty, broke down into separate and provincial customs the general law of the country, and confined the use of arms to the landed gentlemen and their military retainers. Separate interests, endless contentions, and domestic warfare, occupied the whole attention of the nobility. No common concerns, the preservation of no common privileges, no general danger, cemented the disunited body. The monarchy grew grey in years without its subjects having experienced the feelings, or been actuated by the interests, or wielded the power, of an united people.[1] CHAP. I.

[1] Hallam, i. 227. Hume, ii. 115.

II. The long and bloody wars with England, which lasted, with hardly any intermission, for one hundred and twenty years, were fatal to the growth of commercial or manufacturing industry in France, and to the independent spirit which naturally arises from it. The influence of war was chiefly felt in England by the increased demand for domestic industry, the prospects of plunder which continental expeditions afforded, and the high wages which were offered to rouse the energy of the yeomanry.* The English invasions were contemplated in France with very different feelings; Effect of the English Wars.

* It appears from Rymer that the Earl of Salisbury gave a shilling a-day for every man-at-arms, and sixpence for each archer; sums equivalent to fifteen shillings, and seven and sixpence of our money.[2]

[2] Rymer, i. 10, 392. Monstrelet, i. 303.

CHAP. I. defeat and disgrace to the nobles; plunder and devastation to the burghers; misery and starvation to the peasantry. After the feudal nobility were destroyed in the field of Azincour, the whole bonds of society were loosened; every castle or stronghold was fortified and became the residence of a partisan, generally as formidable to his countrymen as his enemies; warfare and rapine universally prevailed; and the miserable peasants, driven into walled towns for protection, could only venture into the fields to cultivate the ground, with scouts stationed on the tops of the steeples to warn them of the approach of danger. The consequences of this insecurity may still be seen in the total absence of cottages in all the north and east of France, as contrasted with the humble but comfortable dwellings which every where rise among the green fields and wooded landscape of England. Commercial opulence, the best nursery of freedom in civilized times, was extinguished during these disastrous contests; industry annihilated by the destruction of its produce, and the total insecurity of its reward; violence became universal, because it alone led to distinction. It was by high pecuniary sacrifices that mercenaries were obtained from foreign states; the Scottish auxiliaries stemmed the progress of disaster at Crevant and Verneuil; and the great military monarchy of France was compelled to seek for protection from the arms of a barbarous people. During such public calamities the growth of freedom was effectually stopped; and the wretched inhabitants, driven to struggle, year after year, for their existence with foreign and domestic enemies, had neither leisure to contemplate the blessings of liberty, nor means to acquire the wealth which could render it of value.[1]

[1] Hallam, i. 108. Villaret, xiv. 302. Sism. France, x. 543, 548.

III. When the enthusiasm of the Maid of Orleans,

Standing armies.

the valour of the nobles, and the domestic dissensions of England, had driven these hated invaders from their shores, the numerous bands of armed men in every part of the kingdom exposed the people to incessant depredation, and imperiously called for some vigorous exertion of the royal authority. From this necessity arose the Companies of Ordonnance of Charles VII., the first example in modern Europe of a STANDING ARMY. These companies, which at first consisted only of 16,000 infantry and 9000 cavalry, soon gave the crown a decisive superiority over the feudal militia, and being always embodied and ready for action, proved more than a match for the slow and uncertain armaments of the nobles. From this period the influence of the crown in France steadily increased; a series of fortunate accidents united the principal fiefs to the monarchy; and neither among the feudal barons, nor the burgher forces, could any counterpoise be found to its authority. The tumultuary array of feudal power, which is only occasionally called out, and very imperfectly disciplined, can never maintain a contest of any duration with a small force of regular soldiers who have acquired skill in the use of arms, and adhere to their colours equally through adverse as prosperous fortune. But to this inherent weakness in the feudal forces, was superadded in France the total want of any popular support to the nobles. The burghers, depressed and insulted by the privileged classes, could not be expected to join in their support; the peasants, unaccustomed to the use of arms, and galled by the recollection of rapine and injury, were both unable to combine against the throne, and unwilling to humble a power from which they themselves stood in need of protection.[1] Hence, in a short time, the crown

[1] Charles V. i. 121, 123. Monstrellet, part ii. §139. Hall. i. 117, 118. Philip de Comines, i. 384.

CHAP. I. acquired despotic authority; and Louis XI., with a regular force of only 24,000 infantry, and 15,000 cavalry, was absolute master of his dominions.

Military of the nation.

IV. The peculiar situation of France in the midst of the great military monarchies of Europe, led to the constant maintenance of a large standing army, and perpetuated the preponderance thus acquired by the throne. Upon the decay of feudal manners, consequent on the progress of luxury, and the destruction of the influence of the nobles, which resulted from the introduction of firearms, no power remained in the state capable of withstanding the regular forces of the monarchy. The nobles flocked to Paris to share in the splendour of the court, or join in the pleasures of the metropolis; the peasantry, undisciplined and depressed by their superiors, and buried in ignorance, lost the remembrance even of the name of freedom. The wars with England, however, had revived the military spirit, not only among the nobles, but the common people, the political events which followed, gave this spirit its natural direction, and France speedily appeared as a conquering power. The courage and energy of the nation rapidly followed this new line of ambition; the sovereign was permitted to increase the forces, which led the van in so brilliant a career; and the people, intoxicated by the conquests of Charles VIII. and Francis I., forgot both the disasters which followed their transient success, and the decisive ascendency which they gave to the government. The desire of military glory, fed by repeated triumphs, became the prevailing passion of the nation; the States-General, which, for half a century, had nearly acquired the authority of the English Parliaments,[1] gradually fell into desuetude, and were abandoned, not so much from the encroachments of the crown, as the neglect

[1] Hallam, i. 256. Mably, Villiers, ii. 128.

of the people. For nearly two hundred years before the commencement of the Revolution, they had never once been assembled, and the nation, dazzled by the pageant of military success, silently resigned to the crown the whole real powers of government.

Privileges of the Nobility.

V. From the earliest times, the distinction between patrician and plebeian, between noble and base-born, had been established in France; and, by an unhappy custom, this privilege descended to all the children, instead of being confined, as in England, to the eldest son. The consequence was, a complete separation of the higher and lower orders, and the establishment of a line of demarcation, which neither talent, enterprise, nor success, was able to pass. "It is a terrible thing," says Pascal, "to reflect on the effect of rank; it gives to a child, newly born, a degree of consideration, which half a century of labour and virtue could not procure." Of all the circumstances in the early history of France, there was none which had a more powerful effect than this in determining the character of the Revolution.

Failure of the Reformation in France.

VI. The REFORMATION, so important in its consequences in other states, failed of producing any material effects in France, from the scanty numbers of the class who were fitted to receive its doctrines. In the maritime and commercial cities on the western coast, it struck its roots; but the peasantry of the country were too ignorant, the nobles of the metropolis too profligate, to embrace its precepts. The contest between the contending parties was disgraced by the most inhuman atrocities; the massacre of St Bartholomew was unparalleled in horror till the Revolution arose, and forty thousand persons were murdered in different parts of France, in pursuance of the perfidious order of the court. Nor were the pro-

CHAP. I. ceedings of the Huguenots more distinguished by moderation or forbearance; their early insurrections were attended by a general destruction of houses, property, and human life; and the hideous features of a servile war disgraced the first efforts of religious freedom. But it was in vain that the talents of Coligni, the generosity of Henry, the wisdom of Sully, supported their cause; the party which they formed in the nation was too small, their influence on the public mind too inconsiderable, to furnish the means of lasting success; and the monarch, who had reached the throne by the efforts of the Protestants, was obliged to consolidate his power, by embracing the faith of his adversaries. France was not enslaved, because she remained Catholic; but she remained Catholic, because she was enslaved: the seeds of religious freedom were sown with no sparing hand, and profusely watered by the blood of martyrs; but the soil was not fitted for their reception, and the shoots, though fair at first, were soon withered by the blasts of despotism. The history of her Reformation, as the annals of its suppression in Spain, exhibits the fruitless struggles of partial freedom with general servitude; of local intelligence with public ignorance; of the energy of advanced civilisation with the force of long-established despotism. The contest arose too soon for the interests of freedom, and too late for the reformation of power; the last spark of liberty expired in France with the capture of Rochelle; and two centuries of unrelenting oppression were required to awaken the people generally, to a sense of the value of those blessings which their ancestors had forcibly torn from their Huguenot brethren.[1]

[1] Lac. Guerres de Religion, ii. 50, 200, 359, 360. Sully, v. 123.

But the influence of despotism in modern times cannot permanently extinguish the light of reason. The

press has provided in the end an antidote to the worst species of government, except perhaps that which arises from its own abuse; its influence on every other oppression may be slow, but it is progressive, and ultimately irresistible. In vain the monarchs of France studiously degraded the lower orders; in vain they covered the corruption of despotism by the splendour of military glory; in vain they encouraged science, and rewarded art, and sought to turn the flood of genius into the narrow channels of regulated ambition; the vigour of thought outstripped the fetters of power; the energy of civilisation broke the bonds of slavery. The middling ranks, in the progress of time, became conscious of their importance; the restrictions of feudal manners revolting to men enlightened by the progress of knowledge; the chains of ancient servitude insupportable to those who felt the rising ambition of freedom. Not the embarrassment of the finances, not the corruption of the court, not the sufferings of the peasantry, brought about the Revolution, for they are to be found matched in many countries, disturbed by no convulsions; but the hateful pride of the aristocracy, based on centuries of exclusive power, and galling to an age of ascending ambition.[1]

[1] Rivarol, 92, 93.

Causes of the savage character of the French Revolution.

The extraordinary character of the French Revolution therefore arose, not from any peculiarities in the disposition of the people, or any faults exclusively owing to the government, but the weight of the despotism which had preceded, and the magnitude of the changes which were to follow it. It was distinguished by violence, and stained with blood, because it originated chiefly with the labouring classes, and partook of the savage features of a servile revolt; it totally subverted the institutions of the country,

CHAP. I. because it condensed within a few years the changes which should have taken place in as many centuries; it speedily fell under the direction of the most depraved of the people, because its guidance was early abandoned by the higher to the lower orders; it led to a general spoliation of property, because it was founded on an universal insurrection of the poor against the rich. France would have done less at the Revolution, if she had done more before it; she would not have so unmercifully unsheathed the sword to govern, if she had not so long been governed by the sword; she would not have fallen, for years, under the guillotine of the populace, if she had not groaned, for centuries, under the fetters of the nobility.

Beneficial effect of periods of suffering.

It is in periods of apparent disaster, during the suffering of whole generations, that the greatest improvements on human character have been effected, and a foundation laid for those changes which ultimately prove most beneficial to the species. The wars of the Heptarchy, the Norman Conquest, the Contests of the Roses, the Great Rebellion, are apparently the most disastrous periods of our annals; those in which civil discord was most furious, and public suffering most universal. Yet these are precisely the periods in which its peculiar temper was given to the English character, and the greatest addition made to the causes of English prosperity; in which courage arose out of the extremity of misfortune, national union out of foreign oppression, public emancipation out of aristocratic dissension, general freedom out of regal ambition. The national character which we now possess, the public benefits we now enjoy, the freedom by which we are distinguished, the energy by which we are sustained, are in a great measure owing to the renovating storms

which have, in former ages, past over our country. The darkest periods of French annals, in like manner, those of the successors of Charlemagne, of the English wars, of the contests of Religion, of the despotism of the Bourbons, are probably the ones which have formed the most honourable features of the French character; which have engrafted on the slavish habits of Roman servitude, the generous courage of modern chivalry; on the passive submission of feudal ignorance, the impetuous valour of victorious patriotism; which have extricated from the collision of opinion, the powers of thought; and nursed, amidst the corruption of despotism, the seeds of liberty. Through all the horrors of the Revolution, the same beneficial law of Nature may be discerned; and the annals of its career will not be thrown away, if, amidst the greatest calamities, they teach confidence in the Wisdom which governs, and inspire hatred at the vices which desolate the world.

CHAPTER II.

CAUSES IN FRANCE WHICH PREDISPOSED TO REVOLUTION.

ARGUMENT.

Proximate causes of the Revolution—The general rise of the lower orders arising from the general prosperity of France, and the fetters on the middling orders—Destruction of powers of great feudatories—Military spirit of people—Philosophy and literature—State of church—Privileges of noblesse—Taxation—State of labouring poor—Feudal services—Administration of justice—Royal prerogative—Corruption at court in prior reigns—Embarrassments of finance—American War—German discipline—Excessive passion for innovation—Equally among nobles as people—Character of Louis XVI.—Maurepas, his first minister—Aided by Turgot, Neckar, and Malesherbes—Their proposed reforms—Opposed by nobles—Death of Maurepas, and dissolution of his ministry—Queen Marie Antoinette—Vergennes, minister—Calonne's plans of finance—They fail—Assembly of Notables—Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, minister—States-General demanded—Ineffectual struggle with Parliaments—Growing spirit of people—Coup d'état of Brienne—Fails—Convocation of States-General agreed to—Neckar's return—He doubles the Tiers Etat—Opening of States-General fixed for May 1789—General discussion on the projected changes—The elections, and temper of the people—Effect of these concessions of Neckar—Napoleon's opinion on them—Reflections on the difference between the love of freedom, and the love of power—Higher orders headed the Revolution.

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"THE people," says the greatest of French statesmen, "never revolt from fickleness, or the mere desire of change. It is the impatience of suffering which alone has this effect."[1] Subsequent events have not falsified the maxim of Sully, though they have shown that it requires modification. If the condition of the lower orders in France, anterior to the Revolution, is examined, it will not be deemed surprising that a convulsion should have arisen; and,

[1] Sully, i. 133.

if humanity sees much to deplore in the calamities it produced, it will find much cause for consolation in the grievances it has removed.

The observation of the French statesman, however, is true only in reference to the commencement of revolutionary troubles. The people, over a whole country, never pass from a state of quiescence to one of tumult, without the experience of practical grievances. Disturbances never assume the magnitude of revolutions, unless these grievances affect the great body of the citizens. But when the minds of men have been once set afloat by successful resistance, subsequent innovations are made from mere temporary causes;—the restlessness following high excitation; the distress consequent on suspended credit; the audacity arising from unpunished crime. "The people," said Robespierre, "will as soon revolt without oppression, as the ocean will heave in billows without the wind."—"True," replied Vergniaud, "but wave after wave will roll upon the shore, after the fury of the winds is stilled."

Universality of disaffection.

The universality of the disaffection which prevailed in France, anterior to the Revolution, is a sufficient indication that causes were in operation affecting all classes in the state. Temporary distress occasions passing seditions; local grievances excite partial discontent; but general and long-continued suffering can alone produce a steady and extended resistance.

In France, at the convocation of the States-General, the desire for change was universal, excepting in part of the privileged orders. The cruelty of the Jacobins, and the precipitate measures of the Constituent Assembly, subsequently produced a very great division of opinion, and lighted the flames of civil war in Lyons and La Vendée; but, in the beginning, one universal

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voice in favour of freedom was heard from Calais to the Pyrenees. The nobles, for the most part, returned members in the interest of their order; the dignified clergy did the same; but the Tiers Etat, and the Curés, unanimously supported the cause of independence. The bitter rancour, which subsequent injustice produced, between the clergy and the supporters of the Revolution, was unknown in its earlier stages; the Tennis Court oath found no warmer supporters than in the solitudes of La Vendée; and the first body who joined the commons in their stand against the throne, were the representatives of the ordinary clergy of France.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 26. Th. i. 8, 41.

Without doubt, the observation of a modern philosopher is well founded, that the march of civilisation necessarily produces a collision between the aristocratic and the popular classes, in every advancing community. Power founded in conquest, privileges handed down from barbarous ages, prerogatives suited to periods of anarchy, are incompatible with the rising desires springing from the tranquillity and opulence of civilized life. One or other must yield; the power of the noblesse must extinguish the rising importance of the commons, or it must be modified by their exertions. But it is not necessary that this change should be effected by a revolution. It is quite possible that it may be accomplished so gradually, as not only to produce no convulsion, but be felt only by its vivifying and beneficial effects upon society. It is sudden innovation which brings about the catastrophe; the rapidity of the descent which converts the stream into a cataract.[2]

[2] Guiz. Hist. Mod. 321.

Situated in the centre of European civilisation, it was impossible that France, in the eighteenth century, could escape the general tendency towards

free institutions. How despotic soever her government may have been; how powerful her armies; how haughty her nobility, the natural progress of opulence, joined to the force of philosophical enquiry, spread an unruly spirit among the middling ranks. The strength of the government, by suppressing private wars, and affording tolerable security to the fruits of industry, accelerated the period of a reaction against itself. The burghers, after the enjoyment of centuries of repose, and the acquisition of a competent share of wealth, felt indignant at the barriers which prevented them from rising into the higher ranks of society; the enterprising, conscious of powers suited to elevated stations, repined at their exclusion from offices of trust or importance; the studious, imbued with the spirit of ancient freedom, contrasted the brilliant career of talent in the republics of antiquity, with its fettered walk in modern times. All classes, except the privileged ones, were discontented with the government, in consequence of the expanded wants which a state of advancing civilisation produced. No institutions, in modern times, can remain stationary, excepting in countries such as the Eastern dynasties, which, by preventing the accumulation of wealth, prevent the possibility of individual elevation; if the lower orders are permitted to better their condition, their expansive force must, in the end, affect the government.

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Middling ranks desirous of elevation.

The universality of slavery prevented this progress from appearing in ancient times. The civilisation of antiquity was nothing but the aggregate of municipal institutions; its freedom, the exclusive privilege of the inhabitants of towns. Hence, with the

CHAP. II. progress of opulence, and the corruption of manners in the higher classes, the struggles of liberty gradually declined, and at last terminated in the authority of a single despot. Their freest ages were the earliest; their most enslaved, the latest of their history. No pressure from below was felt upon the exclusive privileges of the higher orders, because the classes from which it should have originated, were fettered in the bonds of slavery. Careless of the future, destitute of property, incapable of rising in society, provided for by others, the great body of the labouring classes remained in a state of pacific servitude, neither disquieting their superiors by their ambition, nor supporting them by their exertions.[1]

[1] Guiz. Hist. Mod. 31, 54.

Pressure from below strongly felt in modern times.

In modern times, on the other hand, the emancipation of the labouring classes, through the influence of religion, and the extension of information, has, by means of the press, opened the means of elevation to the great body of the people. Individual ambition, the desire of bettering their condition, have thus been let in to affect the progress of freedom. The ebullition of popular discontent becomes most powerful in the later periods of society, because it is then that the accumulated wealth of ages has rendered the lower orders most powerful. The progress of opulence, and the increase of industry, thus become favourable to the cause of liberty, because they augment the influence of those classes by whose exertions it must be maintained. The strife of faction is felt with most severity in those periods when the increasing pressure from below strains the bands by which it has been compressed; and danger or example has not taught the great the necessity of gradual relaxation. If they are slowly and cautiously

unbent, it is Reformation; if suddenly removed, CHAP. II.
either by the fervour of innovation, or the fury of revolt, it is Revolution.

The operation of these causes may distinctly be perceived in the frame of society in every free country in modern times. Universally the chief spring of prosperity is to be found in the lower classes; it is the ascending spirit and increasing energy of the poor, when kept within due bounds by the authority of government and the influence of the aristocracy, which both lays the foundation of national wealth, and secures the progress of national glory. Ask the professional man what occasions the difficulty so generally experienced in struggling through the world, or even in maintaining his ground against his numerous competitors, he will immediately answer, that it is the pressure from below which occasions all his difficulty; his equals he can withstand; his superiors overcome; it is the efforts of his inferiors which are chiefly formidable. Those in general who rise to eminence in every profession are the sons of the middling or lower orders, men whom poverty has inured to hardship, or necessity compelled to exertion, and who have acquired, in the early school of difficulty, habits more valuable than all the gifts which fortune has bestowed upon their superiors.*

Its important effects in modern times.

So universal is the influence of this principle, so important its effects upon the progress and prospects of society, that it may be considered as the grand

* The history and present state of England exhibits numerous and splendid examples of the great acquirements and deeds of persons connected by birth with the aristocratic classes; but this rather confirms than weakens the principle above stated. But for the competition which they had to maintain with the middling and lower orders, there is no reason to suppose that they would have been superior to similar classes in France or the Continental States.

CHAP. II. distinction between ancient and modern times; all others sink into insignificance in comparison. The balance of power in a free country is totally altered in consequence of the prodigious addition thus made to the power and importance of the lower orders; a spring of activity and vigour is provided in the humble stations of life, which proves a rapid remedy for almost every national disaster except those arising from their own licentiousness;—a power developed in the democratic party in the commonwealth, which renders new bulwarks necessary to maintain the equilibrium of society.

Without some advantages to counteract the superior energy and more industrious habits of their inferiors, the higher ranks in a prosperous, opulent, and advancing state, must in general fall a prey to their ambition. The indolence of wealth, the selfishness of luxury, the pride of birth, will prove but feeble antagonists to the pressure of poverty, the self-denial of necessity, the ambition of talent. The successive elevation of the more fortunate or able of the lower orders to the higher ranks of society, is no sufficient antidote to the danger, for it is rare that energy survives the necessity which gave it birth; and nowhere does the enervating influence of wealth appear more strongly than in the immediate descendants of those who have raised themselves by their exertions. The incessant developement of vigour in the lower orders, indeed, if kept within due bounds, and directed in its objects by the influence of religion and the habits of virtue, will always bring a sufficient portion of talent and industry to uphold the fortunes of the state, but not to maintain the ascendency of one class within its bosom; and in the strife of domestic ambition, the aristocracy will find but a feeble support in the de-

scendants of those whom recent wealth has enriched, or recent services ennobled. CHAP. II.

The enervating effect of wealth upon national character, and its tendency to extinguish the love of freedom, so justly and so feelingly complained of by the writers of antiquity, has not hitherto been so strongly experienced in modern times from the influence of the same cause. Corruption uniformly follows in the train of opulence; if those who have raised themselves by their exertions withstand the contagion, it rarely fails to affect their descendants. But the continual rise of citizens from the inferior ranks of society, for a time strongly counteracts the influence of this principle; how feeble or inefficient soever the higher ranks may become, a sufficient infusion of energy is long provided in the successive elevation of classes whom necessity has compelled to exertion. It is by precluding their elevation, or in consequence of corruption extending to their ranks, that an age of opulence sinks irrecoverably into one of degeneracy.

But immortality or perfection is not the destiny of nations in this world, any more than of individuals. The elevation and instruction of the people has opened fountains, from which the vigour of youth is long communicated to the social body, but it has neither purified its vices nor eradicated the seeds of mortality. The tree of knowledge has brought forth its accustomed fruits of good and evil; the communication of intelligence to the mass of mankind has opened the doors as wide to the corruptions as to the virtues of our nature; the progress of wickedness is as certain, and in some cases even more rapid, in the most educated than in the most ignorant states. The anxious desire for elevation and distinction which the consciousness of knowledge gives to the middling

CHAP. II. ranks, long an antidote to the degeneracy of the higher, at length becomes the source of corruptions as great, and effeminacy as complete, as the slavish submission of despotic states. The necessary distinctions of society appear insupportable in an age of ascending ambition; and, in the strife which ensues, the bulwarks of freedom are overturned, not less by the party which invokes, than that which retards the march of democratic power. After the strife is over it is too often discovered that the balance of freedom has been destroyed during its continuance, and that the elements of general liberty no longer exist, from the annihilation of all classes between the prince and the peasant. The lower orders then sink rapidly and irrecoverably into degeneracy, from the experienced impossibility of effecting any thing ultimately beneficial to themselves by contending for independence. According to the condition of society, the age of the state, and the degree of public virtue which prevails, such social contests are the commencement or the termination of an era of prosperity and glory—the expansion of bursting vegetation, or the fermentation which precedes corruption—the revolution which overthrew the tyranny of Tarquin, or the disastrous contests which prepared, in the extinction of patrician power, the final servitude of the empire.

These causes, however, whatever may be their ultimate effects, render a collision between the higher and lower orders unavoidable in every advancing state in modern times. The nobles are naturally tenacious of the privileges and dignities which have descended to them from their ancestors; the middling ranks as naturally endeavour to enlarge theirs, when their increasing wealth or importance enables them to demand it; the lower ultimately become

clamorous for a participation in the franchises which they see exercised by their superiors. It was in the boroughs of Europe that the struggle first commenced, because there the protection of walls, and of assembled multitudes, had produced the earliest passion for independence; it next appeared in England, because there the security of an insular situation, and the efforts of an industrious people, had vivified the seeds of Saxon liberty: it lastly spread to France, because its regular government and powerful armies had long secured the blessings of internal tranquillity and foreign independence. CHAP. II.

I. The destruction of the power of the great vassals of the crown, and the consolidation of the monarchy into one great kingdom during the reigns of Louis XI., Francis I., and Henry IV., was undoubtedly essential to the Revolution. This anomalous and unforeseen result, however, arose not from the oppression so much as the protection afforded by the government to the people. Had the central power been weaker, and the privileges of the great feudatories remained unimpaired, France, like Germany, would have been split into a number of independent duchies, and all unity of feeling or national energy lost in the division of separate interests. A revolution could no more have arrived there than in Silesia or Saxony; whereas, by the destruction of the power of the great vassals, and the rise of a formidable military force at the command of the central government, the unity of the nation was preserved, its independence secured, and its industry protected. For a century and a half before the commencement of the Revolution, France had enjoyed the blessings of domestic tranquillity; no internal dissensions, no foreign invasions, had broken this long period of security and repose; war was Destruction of the power of the nobles.

CHAP. II. known only as affording an outlet to the ardent and impatient spirits, or as yielding a rich harvest of national glory; the worst severities of aristocratic oppression had long been prevented by the cessation of private warfare. During this interval of peace, the relative situation and feelings of the different ranks in society underwent a total change; wealth silently accumulated in the lower orders, from the unceasing efforts of individual industry; power imperceptibly glided from the higher in consequence of the absorption of their revenues in objects of luxury. When civil dissensions again broke out, this difference appeared in the most striking manner. It was no longer the territorial noblesse, headed by their respective lords, who took the field, or the burghers of towns, who maintained insulated contests for the defence of their walls; but the National Guard, who every where flew to arms, animated by one common feeling, and strong in the consciousness of mutual support. They did not wait for their landlords to lead, or their magistrates to direct; but acting boldly for themselves, maintained the cause of democratic freedom against the powers they had hitherto been accustomed to obey.

Military spirit of the people.

II. The military spirit of the French people, and the native courage which a long series of national glories had fostered, rendered them capable both of the moral fortitude to commence, and the patient endurance to sustain, a conflict. But for this circumstance, the Revolution would never have been attempted, or, if begun, would have been speedily crushed by the military force at the disposal of the monarchy. In many countries of Europe, such as Italy, Portugal, and Spain, the people have lost, during centuries of peace, the firmness requisite to earn their freedom.

They complain of their oppressors, they lament their degeneracy, they bewail their liberties, but they have not the boldness to attempt their vindication. Unless under the guidance of foreign officers, they are incapable of any sustained or courageous efforts in the field: when that guardianship is removed, they sink immediately into their native imbecility. But the case was very different with the French. The long and disastrous wars with the English; the religious contests of the 16th century; the continued conflicts with the European powers, had spread a military spirit throughout the people, which neither the enjoyment of domestic peace, nor the advantages of unbroken protection, had been able to extinguish. In every age the French have been the most warlike people of Europe; and the spirit of military enterprise is nearly allied to that of civil freedom. Military courage may, and often does subsist, without domestic liberty; but domestic liberty cannot long subsist without military courage.

Philosophy and Literature.

III. Though the Reformation was extinguished in France, freedom of thought and the spirit of investigation were unrestrained in the regions of taste and philosophy. Louis XIV. made no attempt to curb the literary genius of his age, and the intellectual vigour which was exhibited during his reign, on general subjects, has never been surpassed. In the mental strife which occurred during the Revolution, no more energetic speculation is to be found than in the writings of Corneille and Pascal. But it is impossible that unfettered enquiry can long subsist, without political controversy becoming the subject of investigation. Religion and politics; the condition of man, here and hereafter, ever must form the most interest-

CHAP. II. ing objects of thought. This change, accordingly, took place under the feeble successors of the Grande Monarque. In the philosophical speculations of the eighteenth century, in the writings of Voltaire, Rousseau, Raynal, and the Encyclopædists, the most free and unreserved discussion on political subjects took place. By a singular blindness, the constituted authorities, how despotic soever, made no attempt to curb these enquiries, which, being all couched in general terms, or made in reference to other states, appeared to have no immediate bearing on the tranquillity of the kingdom. Strong in the support of the nobility, the protection of the army, and the long-established tranquillity of the country, they deemed their power beyond the reach of attack, and anticipated no danger from dreams on the social contract, or the manners and spirit of nations. A direct attack on the monarchy would have been followed by an immediate place in the Bastile; but general disquisitions excited no alarm either among the nobility or in the government. So universal was this delusion, that the young nobility amused themselves with visionary speculations concerning the original equality and pristine state of man; deeming such speculations as inapplicable to their case as the license of Otaheite, or the equality of Tartary.[1]

[1] Ségur's Memoirs, i. p. 62. Lac. i. 12, 10.

It is not surprising that the higher ranks mistook the signs of the times. They were advancing into a region in which the ancient landmarks were unknown; where the signs of a new heaven, and hitherto unseen constellations, were to guide the statesman. Judging from the past, no danger was to be apprehended; for all former convulsions of a serious description had been headed by a portion at least of the higher ranks.

Judging from what we now know of the future, the speck was already to be seen in the horizon which was to overwhelm the universe with darkness.

The speculations of these eloquent philosophers spread widely among the rising generation. Captivated by the novelty of the ideas which were developed; dazzled by the lustre of the eloquence which was employed; seduced by the examples of antiquity which were held up to imitation, the youth warmly embraced not only free, but republican principles. The injustice of feudal oppression, the hardship of feudal exclusion, produced a corresponding reaction in the public mind. In the middling ranks, in particular, upon whom the chains of servitude hung heaviest, and who longed most for emancipation, because they would be the first to profit by it, the passion for ancient freedom was wrought up to the highest pitch. Madame Roland, the daughter of an engraver, and living in a humble station, wept at nine years of age because she was not born a Roman citizen, and carried Plutarch's Lives, instead of her breviary, in her hand, when she attended mass in the cathedral.[1]

[1] Madame Roland, i. 88, 89. Introduction, p. 18.

The tenor of the prevailing ideas which have moved the public mind, may always be known from the style of eloquence adopted, and the allusions made use of by those who direct it. During the great Rebellion in England, the language universally employed by the popular leaders was that of gloomy fanaticism; their images and allusions were all drawn from the Old Testament. Fanaticism was the engine by which alone at that period the great body of the people could be moved. In France, religion was never once alluded to by the popular party; or if it was, it was only to be made the subject of derision and obloquy. Classical images; reference to the freedom and

CHAP. II. spirit of antiquity, form the great means of public excitation; the names of Brutus and Cato, of Scipio and Themistocles, were constantly flowing from their lips; the National Assembly never resounded with such tumultuous applause, as when some fortunate allusion to the heroes of Greece or Rome was made; the people never were wrought up to such a state of fervour, as when they were called on to follow the example of the patriots of the ancient republics. Even in periods of extreme peril, with the prospect of immediate death before their eyes, the same splendid imagery was employed; and it is impossible to read, without emotion, the generous sentiments which the victims of popular violence frequently uttered, at their last moments, in the words of ancient eloquence.[1]

[1] Lingard, xi. 360.

State of Church.

IV. The CHURCH in France experienced the fate of all attempts, in an advancing age, to fetter the human mind; the resistance to its authority became general, and, in the fervour of opposition, the good and the bad parts of its doctrines were indiscriminately rejected. This is the usual consequence of attempts to force incredible and absurd doctrines upon public belief. As long as the minds of the people are in a state of torpor or inactivity, they embrace, without scruple, whatever is taught by their spiritual guides; but when the spirit of investigation is roused, and the light of reason breaks in, the reaction becomes just as strong in the opposite direction, and infidel supplies the place of superstitious fanaticism. Religious, as well as political reformers, seldom content themselves with amending what is really defective in the subject of their improvement; in the fervour of innovation they destroy the whole, because part has been found corrupted. It was thus with the Catholic

Church of France; supported, as it had been, by the greatest names, and adorned by the most splendid ability, teaching, for the most part, the most simple and beneficent system of belief, it fell into general obloquy, in consequence of the irrational nature of some of its tenets. How strong soever the force of superstition may be, the power of reason is still stronger; if the former is to be supported, the latter must be enchained. CHAP. II.

Hence, the rise of philosophical investigation in France was attended by an extraordinary degree not merely of free, but irreligious thought. The writings of Raynal, Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau, are too well known to render any illustration of this necessary. Such productions are not permanently hurtful to the cause of religion; the reaction comes with unerring certainty; and the cause of Christianity, purified in the furnace of its human imperfections, at length comes forth in primeval simplicity, and with renovated strength. Already the reaction has begun, and the calm eye of philosophical investigation, undeterred by the sneers of an infidel age, has traced in the French capital, to admiring multitudes, the historical blessings of religious institutions. But the immediate effects of these sceptical writings were to the last degree destructive. By accustoming men to turn into ridicule what others most revere; by leading them to throw off the principles and faith of their forefathers, they prepared the way for a general dissolution, not only of the bonds of religion, but of society. It is a slight step for those who have discarded restraint in religious, to disregard authority in civil concerns.[1]

[1] Guiz. Hist. Europ.

Within the bosom of the church, too, and in all who fell within the sphere of its influence, the seeds

CHAP. II. of deep-rooted discontent were to be found. This arose from the invidious exclusion of all persons of plebeian birth from the dignities and emoluments of the ecclesiastical establishment. In extraordinary cases, indeed, the force of talent may have procured elevation, without the advantages of blood; but, generally speaking, the dignitaries of the church were composed of the same class as the marshals or princes of the empire. While the bishops and elevated clergy were rolling in wealth, or glittering in the sunshine of royal favour, the humbler clergy, to whom the whole practical duties of Christianity were devolved, toiled in virtuous obscurity, hardly elevated either in rank or comfort above the peasantry who composed their flocks.* The simple piety and unostentatious usefulness of these rural priests, while it endeared them to their parishioners, formed a striking contrast to the luxurious habits and dissipated lives of the high-born dignitaries of the church. Their enormous wealth excited the envy both of their own establishment, and of the lower classes of the people, while the general idleness in which they passed their lives, afforded no possibility of justifying the scandalous inequality of their fortunes. Hence the universal indignation, in 1789, at the vices and corruption of the church, and the facility with which, in the very commencement of the Revolution, their

[1] Neckar.
[2] Siêyes, 81. Biblio-thèque d'un Homme Public, par Condorcet, iii. 132.
[3] Chateau-briand, Etudes, Hist. iii. 284.
[4] Thiers, i. 34.

* The total revenues of the church derived from tithes were 130,000,000 francs, of which only 42,000,000 were in the hands of the parochial clergy:[1] the number of the ecclesiastics was 80,000.[2] But this revenue, large as it was, was inconsiderable, compared to the extent of the territorial possessions of this body, which embraced nearly *a half* of the whole land of France.[3] The nobles and the clergy possessed two-thirds of the whole estates of the kingdom; and the other third was in the hands of the Tiers Etat, upon whom fell the greater proportion of the burdens of the state.[4]

property was sacrificed to relieve the embarrassments of the finances.[1] CHAP. II.

[1] Rivarol, 93. De Staël, i. 13.

V. Insult is more keenly resented than injury. The pride of nobility is more difficult to tolerate than all the exclusive advantages which they possess. "Numerous and serious as the grievances of the French nation were," says the ablest of the royalist writers, "it was not them that occasioned the Revolution. Neither the taxes, nor the lettres de cachet, nor the other abuses of authority, nor the vexations of the prefets, nor the ruinous delays of justice, have irritated the nation; it is the *prestige* of nobility which has excited all the ferment,—a fact which proves that it was the shopkeepers, the men of letters, the monied interest, in fine, all those who were jealous of the nobility, who roused against them the lower classes in the towns, and the peasantry in the country. In truth, it is an extraordinary circumstance, that the nation should say to a child possessed of parchment,—'You shall one day be either a prelate, a marshal, or an ambassador, as you choose,' while it has nothing to offer to its other children." In fact, the men of talent, and the men of fortune, found this distinction so insupportable, that they invariably purchased a patent of nobility when they had the means of doing so; but from this arose a new difficulty, and fresh dangers to the monarchy. The wealth which purchased titles could not confer eminence; it could not give historic names, or remove the stain of ignoble birth. Hence the distinction between the old families and those newly ennobled, and a division in the aristocracy, which prevented them from ever adopting any common measures for their safety. The great families were more jealous of the *parvenus* than of the inferior classes of the people.[1]

Privileges of Nobles.

[1] Rivarol, 93, 94. De Staël, i. 44, 198.

CHAP. II. From the last they anticipated no danger; the first were placed in a situation approaching too closely to their exclusive domain.

The distinction of nobility and base-born was carried to a length in France, of which it is difficult, in this free country, to form a conception. Every person was either noble or *roturier;* no middling class, no shades of distinction were known. On the one side were 150,000 privileged individuals; on the other, the whole body of the French people. All situations of importance in the church, the army, the court, the bench, or the diplomatic line, were exclusively enjoyed by the former of these classes. In a flourishing and prosperous country, such a system is of itself sufficient to produce a revolution. Men of fortune will not long submit to the insolence of aristocratic pride—men of talent, in the end, will scorn the trammels of patronage, and the condescension of fashion. When a public has arisen, and the means of arriving at distinction, independent of the support of the nobility, exist, talent will generally incline, in a country so situated, to the side, whatever it is, which is opposed to the government. This tendency may be observed in all free countries, and in none more than the recent history of England. It is provided for in the independence of thought which is the general accompaniment of real talent, and is the counterpoise provided by nature to the influence of government which might otherwise prove overwhelming. This change accordingly had taken place in France before the Revolution. The industrious classes, the men of talent, the men of wealth, were unanimous in their hatred of the nobility; the universal cry was for Liberty and EQUALITY,—an exclamation almost unknown in the English Rebellion. Equality of rank,

abolition of privileges, equal eligibility for office, were the universal passion of the nation, because they were the pressing evils which had excited the discontents, and thwarted the vanity, which has always, by their own admission, been the leading feature of the French character. The insurrection was less against the throne than against the nobility—against the oppressive weight of feudal tyranny, inconsistent with the spirit of the age, and bequeathed by the power of barbarian conquest.[1] CHAP. II.

[1] Thiers, i. 34, 35. Nap. in D'Abr. vii. 169. Rivarol, 7.

VI. The taxation of France afforded a practical grievance of the most serious kind, rendered yet more galling by the inequality with which it was imposed. The two privileged orders, of the nobles and the clergy, were exempted from several of the most oppressive imposts,—a privilege grounded on the feudal fiction, that the former defended the state by their swords, while the latter interceded for it by their prayers. Such a reason was peculiarly untenable, after a long period of peace, during which the nobility were exclusively occupied in the frivolities of the court; and many of the higher clergy suspected, with too much reason, of sharing in its vices. The actual addition which the exemption of so large a proportion of the most opulent classes made to the burdens of the people, though by no means inconsiderable, was the least part of the evil; the bitterness lay in the sense of its injustice.[2] Taxation.

[2] Monthion, Chancellor to Count d'Artois, 154. De Staël, i. 150. Thiers, i. 34.

But much misrepresentation has taken place on this subject, and the freedom from taxation by the privileged orders been generally described as much more general than it really was. They certainly did not contribute equally with each other, or with the commons; but they both paid largely to the public service,—neither the nobility nor clergy enjoyed

CHAP. II. any exemption from any of the indirect impositions which in France, as in other countries, constituted so large a proportion of the public revenue. The nobility paid the capitation tax and the twentieth penny or vingtième, which, together, sometimes amounted to four shillings in the pound. The clergy in the provinces annexed by conquest to France, comprehending about an eighth of the territory and a sixth of the wealth of the kingdom, also paid the capitation and the vingtième; and although the clergy in the old provinces did not pay the capitation, this was because they had redeemed it for payment of 24,000,000 of livres, or L.1,000,000 sterling;—they did not pay the vingtième, but they, in return, made free gifts and were subject to other charges, which amounted to nearly as much as their proportion of what was paid by the other orders. The real ground of complaint, and it was a most substantial one, was the exemption of both the privileged orders from the taille: a direct burden on the produce of land, of the most odious and impolitic kind, and the weight of which being borne exclusively by the Tiers Etat, led to the general impression that the privileged orders were entirely freed from taxation of any sort.[1]

[1] Burke's Considerations, Works, v. 222, 223. Duc de Gaeta, ii. 311.

The taxes of France were not only heavy, but unequally distributed even upon the classes who bore them, and in an especial manner oppressive to the cultivators of the soil. The taille and the vingtième imposts, exclusively affecting agricultural labour, and following its profits, with other smaller burdens, amounted to no less than 171,000,000 of francs, or L.7,505,000 sterling, a sum at least equivalent to L.15,000,000 on the land of England. So excessive was the burden which this created upon agricultural

labour, that it has been calculated, by a very competent observer, that, supposing the produce of an acre worth L.3, 2s. 7d., the proportion which went to the king was L.1, 18s. 4d.; to the landlord, 18s.; to the actual cultivator, 5s.; or, if the proprietor cultivated his own land, his share was only L.1, 4s. 3d., while that of the king was L.1, 18s. 4d. In other words, if the produce of an acre had been divided into twelve parts, nearly seven-and-a-half went to the king, three-and-a-half to the proprietor, and one to the farmer; whereas in England, at the same period, if the produce of an acre were L.8, the land-tax and poors'-rates would be 10s., the rent L.1, 10s, and the share of the cultivator L.6, being three-fourths of the produce, instead of one-twelfth, as under the French monarchy. Nearly one-third of France, at this period, was in the hands of small proprietors, upon whom these taxes fell with unusual severity.[1]

[1] Arthur Young, i. 332, 574, 575. Rap. du Comité de l'Imposit. Pièces Just. No. 1. Marshall's Travels, iv. 332, 333.

The taxes on consumption amounted to 260,000,000 francs, or L.10,400,000, and the total revenue to 469,000,000 francs, or L.18,750,000; but this immense burden was imposed without any regard to equality in the different provinces. Some had obtained commutations unreasonably favourable to themselves; others, from having evinced a refractory spirit, had been saddled with more than a just proportion of the public burdens. Those which had obtained no commutation, were liable to a progressive and most vexatious increase of their imposts. The fixing of these burdens was in the hands of the intendants of the provinces, from whose decision there was, practically speaking, no appeal, and who frequently exercised their powers in an arbitrary manner.[2] Royal commissions had been established to take cognizance of questions regarding the revenues,

[2] Monthion, 155. Th. i. 84. De Staël, i. 152. Young, i. 575, 576, 598.

CHAP. II. of which the decision properly belonged to the ordinary tribunals; several contributions were judged of by the king in council,—a species of judicature, in which justice was not likely to be obtained.

State of Labouring Poor.

VII. When the weight of the taxes under which they groaned is considered, it will not appear surprising that the cultivators of France were in the most miserable state. Mr Young calculated, in 1789, that the rural labourer in France, taking into view the price of provisions, was 76 per cent poorer than in England; that is, he had 76 per cent less of the necessaries and conveniencies of life than fell to the lot of a similar class in this country; and rural labour being 76 per cent cheaper in France than England, it follows that all those classes which depend on that labour, and are the most numerous in society, were, in a similar proportion, less at their ease, worse fed, worse lodged, worse clothed, than their brethren on this side of the Channel. With a very few exceptions, accordingly, the peasantry were in the most indigent condition,—their houses dark, comfortless, and almost destitute of furniture—their dress ragged and miserable—their food the coarsest and most humble fare. "It reminded me," says Mr Young, "of the miseries of Ireland!" Nor was the condition of the people more comfortable in those extensive districts of the country where small properties existed; on the contrary, they were uniformly distinguished by the most numerous and squalid population. Nor is that surprising; nothing can conduce so much to a redundant population as a minute division of landed property and an oppressive government; the means of subsistence, without the means of enjoyment; scope to the principle of increase, without any developement of its limitations.[1]

[1] Young, 98, 148, 413, 447. Marshall, i. 232. iv. 101.

VIII. In addition to an indigent peasantry, France was cursed with its usual attendant, a non-resident body of landed proprietors. This was an evil of the very first magnitude, drawing after it, as is invariably the case, a discontented tenantry, and a neglected country. The great proprietors all resorted to Paris in quest of amusement, of dissipation, or of advancement; and, with the exception of La Vendée, where a totally different system of manners prevailed, the country was hardly ever visited by its landlords. The natural consequence of this was, that no kindly feelings, no common interest, united the landlord and his tenantry. The former regarded the cultivators in no other light than as beasts of burden, from whose labour the greatest portion of profit was to be extracted; the latter considered their lords as tyrants, known only by the vexatious visits, and endless demands of their bailiffs. From being neglected by their natural guardians, and experiencing no benefits or encouragement from them, the labouring classes every where imbibed a sour and discontented spirit, and were ready to join any incendiaries who promised them the pillage of their chateaux, or the division of their estates. Nor was this all: All those useful and beneficial undertakings, so common in England, which unite together the landed aristocracy and their tenantry, by the benefit they confer upon the estates of the former, and the employment they afford to the industry of the latter, were unknown in France. No improvements in agriculture, no advances of capital, were made by the proprietors of the soil; roads, harbours, canals, and bridges, were undertaken and managed exclusively by the government; and the influence naturally arising from the employment of industry and the expenditure of capital, was wholly

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Non-Resident Proprietors.

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lost to the French noblesse. In La Vendée alone, the landlords lived in pristine simplicity, consuming, in rustic profusion, the produce of their estates upon their own lands; and, in La Vendée alone, the tenantry supported them in the hour of trial, and waged a doubtful and glorious war with the Republican forces.[1]

[1] Barante, in Madame de la Rochejaquelein, p. 45, 46. Scott's Napoleon, i. 31. Young, i. 598.

Feudal Services.

IX. The local burdens and legal services due by the tenantry to their feudal superiors, were to the last degree vexatious and oppressive. The peasantry in France were almost all ignorant; not one in fifty could read, and in each province they were unaware of what was passing in the neighbouring one. At the distance of fifty miles from Paris, they were unacquainted with what was going forward during the most interesting era of the Revolution. They rose at the instigation of the demagogues in the neighbouring towns to burn the chateaux of their landlords; but never carried their ideas beyond the little circle of their immediate observation.[2] No public meetings were held, no periodical press was within their reach to spread the flame of discontent; yet the spirit of resistance was universal from Calais to Bayonne. This affords decisive evidence of the existence of a serious mass of oppression or numerous local grievances, capable of producing discontent so general, and hatred so implacable. The feudal rights of the landed proprietors stood foremost in this list of grievances. The most important operations of agriculture were fettered or prevented by the game laws, and the restrictions intended for their support. Game of the most destructive kind, such as wild boars and herds of deer, were permitted to go at large through large districts called *Capitaneries*, without any enclosures to protect the crops. The

[2] Young, i. 58. Marshall, iv. 68.

damage they did to the farmers, in four parishes of Montceau only, amounted to 184,000 francs, or nearly L.8000 a-year.[1] Numerous edicts existed, which prohibited hoeing and weeding, lest the young partridges should be disturbed; mowing hay, lest the eggs should be destroyed; taking away the stubble, lest the birds should be deprived of shelter; manuring with night soil, lest their flavour should be injured.[2] Complaints for the infraction of these edicts were all carried before the manorial courts, where every species of oppression, chicanery, and fraud, were prevalent.[3] Nothing can exceed the force of expression used in the cahiers of the provincial bodies, in describing the severity of these feudal services. Fines were imposed at every change of property, in the direct and collateral line; at every sale, to purchasers; the people were bound to grind their corn at the landlord's mill, press their grapes at his press, and bake their bread at his oven.[4] Corvées, or obligations to repair the roads, founded on custom, decrees, and servitude, were enforced with the most rigorous severity;[5] in many places the use even of handmills was not free, and the seigneurs were invested with the power of selling to the peasants the right of bruising buck wheat or barley between two stones.[6] It is vain to attempt a description of the feudal services which pressed with so much severity upon industry in every part of France. Their names cannot find parallel words in the English language.* Long be-

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[1] Cahier du Tiers Etat de Maux, 49.

[2] Young, i. 600.

[3] Cahiers Rennes, art. 12. Nivernois, art. 43.

[4] Young, i. 601.

[5] Tiers Etat, Rennes, 159.

[6] Rennes, 57.

* We should be at a loss to know what was meant by "Chevauchès, Quintaines Soule, Saut de Poison, Baiser de Maries, Chansons, Transports d'Oeuf sur Charette, Silence de Grenouilles, Corvée à Misericorde, Melods, Lesde, Couponage, Cartilage, Barage, Fouage, Maréchassée, Ban Veu, Ban d'Aout, Troussés, Gilinage, Civirage, Taillabilité Vingtaine, Stertage, Bordelage, Meriage, Ban de Vendanges, Droit d'Accepté," [7] if the universal voice of the French people, mani-

[7] Résumé des Cahiers, iii. 316, 317.

CHAP. II. fore the Revolution broke out, complaints were loudly heard over the whole country, of the baneful tendency of these feudal exactions. They became better understood by the higher classes as it advanced, from the clamour which was raised by the nobility at their abolition.

The *Corvées*, or burdens imposed for the maintenance of the highways, annually ruined vast numbers of the farmers. In filling up one valley in Lorraine, no less than three hundred were reduced to beggary.[1] The enrolments for the militia were also the subject of grievous complaint, and styled in the cahiers "an injustice without example."[2] But the people soon found that they had made a grievous exchange in substituting for it the terrible conscription of Napoleon.

[1] Rennes, i. 598.

[2] Nob. Briey, 6, 7. Young, ii. 598.

Indeed, although these services were numerous and vexatious, they did not constitute so considerable a grievance, as the indignant feelings of the French provincial writers would lead us to imagine. "The people of Scotland," says Sir Walter Scott, "were in former times subject to numerous services, which are now summed up in the emphatic word rent," and this in truth was equally the case with the French tenantry. Their general condition was that of *Metayers;* that is, they received their implements and stock from their landlords, and divided with him the gross produce, after the tax-gatherer was satisfied. The numerous feudal services were just a payment of rent in kind; a species of liquidation universal and unavoidable in all rural districts in a certain stage of civilisation, when a ready market for agricultural produce is, from the absence of great

[3] Young, i. 206.

fested in their cahiers, or official instructions to the Deputies at the States-General from the electors, had not proclaimed that they signified real and oppressive burdens.[3]

towns, or the want of internal communication, not to be found. The people expected, when feudal services and tithes were abolished, during the Revolution, that their amount would form a clear addition to their gains; but they soon found that they only augmented the rent of their landlords, and that their own condition was in no degree ameliorated. Without doubt, the multitude of demands on the French tenantry was often in the highest degree vexatious; but it may be doubted whether their weight has been alleviated by their condensation into a single payment; and whether the terrors of the words RENT and TAXES do not now equal those of the whole catalogue of feudal obligations.* CHAP. II.

X. The administration of justice, as in all countries where public opinion has not its due weight, or the judges are exempted from its control, was liable to many abuses in France. In some places it was partial, venal, and infamous. Fortune, liberal presents, court favour, the smiles of a handsome wife, or promises of advancement to relations, sometimes swayed the decisions of the judges. This evil was felt in many parts of the country. The common opinion, though often unfounded, was, that to obtain justice in any of the provincial courts was out of the question. Nor were the decisions of the Parliaments more unsullied. These numerous and public spirited bodies, notwithstanding their loud professions of patriotism, were not always exempt from corruption; and the diversity of their customs introduced a degree of variance into their determinations, which rendered all attempt at uniformity, impracticable.[1] But although, like the other institutions of the Administration of Justice.

[1] Monthion, 154. Thiers, i. 35. Young, i. 598, 602.

* The land-tax in France is now twenty-five per cent, at the very lowest, on the gross agricultural profits; often forty or fifty per cent on the landowners' gains.—See vol. iv., 736, and authorities there quoted.

CHAP. II. monarchy, the Provincial Parliaments stood much in need of amendment, yet they had several particulars in their constitution deserving of the highest approbation, and which had rendered them the cradles of freedom during the corruptions and oppression of preceding reigns. They possessed one fundamental excellence, they were independent. The most doubtful circumstance connected with their mode of appointment, that of its being purchased, contributed to this independence of character. They held for life, indeed many may be said to have held by inheritance. Though appointed by the monarch, they were nearly out of his power. The more determined the exertions of that authority against them became, the more their spirit of freedom and independence became manifest. They composed permanent bodies politic, and from that corporate and lasting constitution were well calculated to afford both certainty and stability to the laws. They had been a safe asylum to these laws in all the revolutions of opinion and all the frowns of power. They had saved that sacred deposit of the country during the reigns of arbitrary princes and the struggles of arbitrary factions. They were the great safeguard to private property: their decisions, though varying with the customs of the different provinces, were, generally speaking, honest and upright: they had furnished no inconsiderable corrective to the vices and excesses of the monarchy. The independent spirit which terminated in the Revolution began in the free and courageous conduct of their assemblies during a contest of nearly half a century with the ordinances of the Crown; and it is one of the strongest proofs of the insanity which ultimately got possession of the public mind, that one of the first acts of the democratic party, upon attaining supreme authority,[1] was to sweep away

[1] Burke's Considerations, Works, vi. 367.

these venerable bulwarks by which they had so long been sheltered from the invasion of despotic power. CHAP. II

XI. The Royal Prerogative, by a series of successful usurpations, had reached a height inconsistent with any thing like real freedom. The most important right of a citizen, that of deliberating on the passing of laws, and the granting of supplies, had fallen into desuetude. For nearly two centuries, the Kings, of their own authority, had published *ordinances* possessing all the authority of laws, and which originally could not be sanctioned but by the representatives of the people. The right of approving or registering, as it was called, these ordinances, was transferred to the Parliaments and courts of justice; but their deliberations were liable to be suspended by *lits de justice*, or personal interventions of the sovereign, and infringed by arbitrary imprisonments. The regulations which could legally be made only by the King in Council, were frequently adopted without the intervention of that body; and so usual had this abuse become, that in many branches of government it was habitual. Taxes were imposed without the consent of the nation, or of its representatives; those originally laid on by legal authority continued after the stipulated period of their endurance had ceased, or were augmented far beyond the amount agreed to by the people. Criminal commissions, composed of persons nominated solely by the Crown, were frequently appointed, and rendered both personal liberty and real property insecure. Warrants of imprisonment, without either accusation or trial, might deprive any subjects of their freedom, and consign them to a dungeon for the remainder of their lives. Debts to an enormous amount, and of which the annual charge absorbed more than half the revenue of the state, had been Royal Prerogative.

CHAP. II. contracted without national authority, or increased without its knowledge. The public creditors, kept in the dark as to the state of the finances, or of the security which existed for their payment, were daily becoming more apprehensive of the ultimate solvency of the state. The personal expenses of the kings had risen under the reigns of Louis XIV. and XV. to a very great height, and they were not distinguished from the ordinary expenditure of government, except in a secret record, no part of which was divulged to the people. The salaries of all the civil servants of the Crown, and of the higher officers in the army, were deemed excessive; while the duties of their several offices were either neglected or performed by deputy.[1]

[1] De Staël, i. 130, 153. Monthion, 153, 154. Th. i. 154. Etat de la Dette 1790, 8.

XII. Corruption, in its worst form, had long tainted the manners of the court as well as the nobility, and poisoned the sources of influence. The favour of royal mistresses, or the intrigues of the court, openly disposed of the highest appointments both in the army, the church, and the civil service. Since the reign of the Roman emperors, profligacy had never been conducted in so open and undisguised a manner as under Louis XV. and the Regent Orleans. From the secret memoirs of the period, which have now been published, it is manifest that the licentious novels which at that time disgraced French literature, conveyed a faithful picture of the manners of the age; that the scenes in Faublas, the Liaisons Dangereuses, and Crebillon, are by no means overcharged. Favourites of women of rank, selected often from the middling classes of society, were rewarded for their fidelity by a place in the Bastile, at the instance of their treacherous paramours.*

Corruption at Court.

* Such was the dissolution of the manners of the court, that no less

The reign of Louis XV. is the most deplorable in French history. If we seek for the characters who governed the age, we must search the antechambers of the Duc de Choiseul, or the boudoirs of Madame Pompadour or Du Barri. The whole frame of society seemed to be decomposed. Statesmen were ambitious to figure as men of letters; men of letters as statesmen; the great seigneurs as bankers; the farmers-general as great seigneurs. The fashions were as ridiculous as the arts were misplaced. Shepherdesses were represented in hoops in saloons, where colonels were engaged in feminine pursuits; every thing was deranged in the public feeling and manners, the sure sign of an approaching convulsion. Society had reached that puerile stage which appeared in Rome at the time of the Gothic invasion, and in Constantinople under the Byzantian emperors; instead of making verses in cloisters, they made them in drawingrooms; a happy epigram rendered a general more illustrious than a victory gained.[1]

[1] Chateaubriand, Etud. Hist. i. 118, Preface.

It was the peculiarity of that age, that manners had assumed this frivolous and corrupt tone in the higher, at the same time that nobler and more generous sentiments had, from the progress of knowledge and the spread of civilisation, sprung up in the middling ranks. Madame Roland, a citizen's daughter, has given a graphic picture of the horror with which the rising ambition and conscious talent of the middling ranks regarded the frivolity and vices of their hereditary rulers. "It excited my[2] early astonishment," says she, "that such a state of

[2] Roland, Mém. 112.

[3] Du Barri's Memoirs, i. & ii. Lab. Hist. de la Rév. i. 281. Soulavie, i. 715.

than 500,000,000 francs of the public debt, or L.20,000,000 sterling, had been incurred for expenses too ignominious to bear the light, or be even named in the public accounts; and the amount of expenditure of this description was ten times greater in the time of Louis XV., than it had been in that of Louis XIV.[3]

CHAP. II. things did not occasion the immediate fall of the empire, or provoke the avenging wrath of Heaven."

The effects of this general dissolution of principles appeared in the strongest manner, both in the habits of the people, and in the literature of the age. From thence has flowed that stream of depravity and licentiousness which has so long been peculiarly and characteristically the disgrace of French literature; and from these examples has followed that universal license of manners, which has now descended with the general growth of irreligion so far, that the illegitimate births in Paris will apparently soon be equal to the legitimate, and already every third child to be seen in the streets is a bastard.[1] *

[1] Dupin, Force Commercial, vol. i. 99. Roland, Mém. i. 112.

XIII. Embarrassment in the finances was the immediate cause of the Revolution. It compelled the King to summon the States-General as the only means of avoiding national bankruptcy. Previous ministers had tried temporary expedients, and every effort had been made to avert the disaster; but the increasing expenses arising from the weight of the annual charge of the debt, rendered them all abortive.†

Embarrassment of Finances.

The annual deficit was nearly 189,000,000 francs,

* In 1824, out of 28,812 births, 18,591 only were the result of marriage; 9221 were illegitimate.[2] The proportion of illegitimate births is now greater. In 1831, the legitimate births were 19,152; the illegitimate 10,378.—*Ann. du Bureau des Long.*

[2] Dupin, i. 99.

† The revenue for the year 1789 amounted to 469,938,245 francs, or L.18,800,000; the debt to 6,500,000,000 francs, or L.244,000,000 sterling; and its annual charge to 259,000,000 francs, or L.10,400,000 sterling.[3] The annual expenses at this period amounted to 400,000,000 francs, or L.16,000,000, exclusive of the charges of the debt;[4] so that while the annual expenses were 400,000,000 francs or L.16,000,000

Interest of debt, . . .	259,000,000	or	10,400,000
	659,000,000		L.26,400,000
While the annual income was	470,000,000	or	18,800,000
Annual deficit, . . .	189,000,000	or	L.7,600,000

[3] Etat de la Dette Publique, 1790, p. 8. Young, i. 576, 577, 578, 579.

[4] Neckar, de l'Administration des Finances. Lac. vi. 110.

or above SEVEN MILLIONS sterling. No provision whatever was made for the liquidation or reduction of the debt. It is true a large proportion of the public burdens were for life annuities; but still the exhausted state of the treasury made some extraordinary measures necessary to satisfy even their passing demands. No other measure appeared practicable but the convocation of the States-General, from whom some relief, by the appropriation of part of the church-property, was expected by all parties; and the immediate cause of the Revolution was thus the improvidence and waste of preceding reigns.[1]

[1] Neckar de l'Administration des Finances, p. 87. Mig. i. 13, 23. Th. i. 22. Lac. vi. 110.

XIV. While the minds of the people were in a state of fermeñt, arising from the concurrence of so many causes of dissatisfaction, the imprudent policy of the French government in engaging in the Ame-

American War.

The following Table will exhibit the steady progress of the deficit under the various administrations which preceded the Revolution:—

1781—NECKAR, *Minister.*		
Income,	236,833,000 francs or	L.9,300,000
Expenditure,	283,162,000 or	11,600,000
Deficit,	46,329,000 or	L.2,300,000
1786—CALONNE, *Minister.*		
Income,	474,047,649 francs or	L.18,800,000
Expenditure,	589,184,995 or	23,600,000
Deficit,	115,137,346 or	L.4,800,000
1787—CALONNE, *Minister.*		
Income,	474,048,239 francs or	L.19,000,000
Expenditure,	599,135,795 or	24,000,000
Deficit,	125,087,556 or	L.5,000,000
1788—BRIENNE, *Minister.*		
Income,	472,415,549 francs or	L.17,200,000
Expenditure,	527,255,089 or	21,100,000
Deficit, Ordinary,	54,839,540 or	2,200,000
Extraordinary, Deficit,	76,502,367 or	2,900,000
	29,293,585 or	1,000,000
Total,	160,635,492 or	L.6,100,000

—See *Comptes Rendus par Calonne et Neckar*, 1781, 1787, and 1788. 2 vols. 4to.

CHAP. II. rican war, lighted a spark which speedily set the train on fire. From jealousy of the English power, and a desire to increase the difficulties of that country in the contest with her colonies, Louis XVI. took the dangerous step of aiding the insurgents. The consequence was that the French soldiers, who were sent over to support the cause of Transatlantic freedom, imbibed the intoxicating ideas of patriotic resistance; language unknown in their own country grew familiar to their ears; from being parties in a strife in which the authority of legitimate government was resisted, they became zealous in the cause of independence; from proving victorious in a contest in which royal power was overthrown, they easily passed over to the admiration of republican institutions. The success of the Americans shook the foundations of despotism in the old world; and the throne of Louis tottered from his efforts to overthrow that of the English monarch. Not that the French monarch contemplated any such change, or was even convinced of the expedience of engaging in the contest. On the contrary, his secret correspondence proves that when he gave orders for the commencement of the war, he yielded against his better judgment to a passion in the public mind which appeared to him at least irresistible.*

The early leaders of the Revolution accordingly were men who had signalized themselves in the cause of American independence. The Marquis La Fayette, and many other young noblemen of talent and consideration, returned from the other side of the Atlantic with a warm admiration of republican insti-

* "How painful," said he, "to be obliged, for reasons of state, to sign orders and commence a great war, contrary alike to my wishes and my opinions."—*Corresp. Conf. de Louis XVI.*, ii. 178, 187, and Lab. ii. 61.

tutions, and an ardent desire to hold them up to the imitation of their countrymen. The friends of liberty were roused by the triumph of independence in the New World, and the flame rapidly spread among an enthusiastic people, who had so many more real causes of complaint than the patriots whose success was the subject of their exultation.[1]

[1] Lac. v. 341. Lab. ii. 57.

XV. While so many causes were preparing the approach of a political convulsion, the injudicious measures of the government alienated the affection of the ARMY, and exposed them to the influence of the same causes which had shaken the allegiance of the other classes in the state. The abuses in the distribution of the pay and furnishings of the troops, were so excessive, that the sums expended on the officers were as large as those on the private soldiers; while the impolitic introduction of the German discipline, with its useless formalities and severe punishments, excited the loudest complaints among the lower ranks of the army. These regulations awakened such profound indignation among the French soldiers, that they wept with grief at beholding their comrades punished by blows from the flat part of the sabre. While the nobles were enthusiastic in favour of English customs and American freedom, the officers of the army became extravagant imitators of the Prussian discipline. It is difficult to say which species of innovation proved most prejudicial to France. An imprudent and ill-timed regulation had been adopted in 1781, that noble birth was essential to obtaining a commission in the army: an hundred years of nobility was deemed a necessary qualification to an officer. This regulation irritated the Tiers Etat, without securing the attachment of the army, and was so contrary to the opinion of the age, that it could not

German discipline in Army.

CHAP. II.

be carried into execution. To complete the misfortune, the French guards, from being permanently stationed in Paris, and in continual intercourse with the most depraved classes of the capital, were not only in a state of insubordination, but influenced by all the feelings and passions of the citizens; and they accordingly gave the first example of defection at the breaking out of the Revolution: a memorable instance to succeeding ages of the peril of intrusting the safety of the state to a body of troops, who, from being constantly in communication with the populace, became tainted by the contagion of their passions; and of preferring a well-dressed body of corrupted guards to the ruder aspect of faithful defenders.[1]

[1] Mign. i. 49, 118, 120. Th. i. 89. Monthion, 154. De Staël, i. 123, 153. Ségur, i. 119, 120, 271. Lab. ii. 44.

Excessive passion for innovation.

XVI. The circumstances which have now been mentioned, without doubt contributed to the formation of that discontent which formed the predisposing cause of the Revolution. But the exciting cause, as physicians would say, the immediate source of the convulsion, was the SPIRIT OF INNOVATION, which, like a malady, overspread France at that crisis, precipitated all classes into a passion for changes, of which they were far from perceiving the ultimate effects, and in the end induced evils far greater than those they were intended to remove.

There is no unmixed good in human affairs: the best principles, if pushed to excess, degenerate into fatal vices. Generosity is nearly allied to extravagance—charity itself may lead to ruin—the sternness of justice is but one step removed from the severity of oppression. It is the same in the political world: the tranquillity of despotism resembles the stagnation of the Dead Sea; the fever of innovation, the tempests of the Ocean. It would seem as if, at particular periods, from causes inscrutable to human wisdom,

an universal frenzy seizes mankind; reason, experience, prudence, are alike blinded; and the very classes who are to perish in the storm, are the first to raise its fury.

France exhibited a striking proof of the truth of this observation, for a number of years preceding the Revolution. During the reign of Louis XV. no one thought of a convulsion, though it was rapidly approaching, and the most ardent in the cause of innovation were those whose fortunes were about to perish from its effects. The young nobles applauded the writings of Raynal, Voltaire, and Rousseau, and repeated all the arguments against their exclusive privileges and the feudal system, without ever suspecting that they would be the first victims of such opinions. Long before the Tiers Etat had adopted them, the seeds of liberty had spread widely among the French noblesse; but the approaches of the spirit of innovation were so disguised under the colours of philanthropy, that none perceived its consequences. "In truth," says Ségur, "who could have anticipated the terrible flood of passions and crimes which was about to be let loose on the world, at a time when all writings, all thoughts, all actions, seemed to have but one end, the extirpation of abuses, the propagation of virtue, the relief of the people, the establishment of freedom? It is thus that the most terrible convulsions are ushered into the world; the night is serene, the sunset fair, which precedes the fury of the tornado."[1]

[1] Ségur, i. 21, 38, 40, 76, 79, 94. Lab. i. 3.

The passion for innovation increasing during the latter years of the reign of Louis XV., became irresistible under the succeeding monarch. It seized all classes, embraced all subjects, overwhelmed all understandings. The extravagant imitation of English

CHAP. II. customs and manners, called the *Anglomania*, was more than a mere foolery of fashion; it was the effort of a disposition disquieted and dissatisfied with itself, and proceeded from a secret desire to imitate the free institutions of a country, whose extravagances were so much the object of admiration.[1]

[1] Ségur, i. 24, 25, 268. Lab. ii. 3, 4.

But the American war was the great change which blew into a flame the embers of innovation. The admiration of England immediately was transferred to its enemies; the ancient rivalry of Britain combined with the rising passion for republican institutions;—it literally forced the government to take a part in the contest. Such was the universal enthusiasm which seized upon the nation at its commencement, that nobles of the highest rank, princes, dukes, and marquises, solicited with impatient zeal commissions in the regiments destined to aid the insurgents. It was hard to say whether the government, the nobles, or the commons, were most zealous in their support. Rousseau foresaw in this universal passion the commencement of a new era in human affairs, the era of revolutions; while the governments of France, Spain, and Russia, considered it only as the means of humbling the naval ascendency of England.[2]

[2] Ségur, i. 100, 149, 189. Lab. ii. 4, 5.

The passion for republican institutions increased with the successes of the American war, and at length rose to such a height as to infect even the courtiers of the palace. Thunders of applause shook the theatre of Versailles at the celebrated lines of Voltaire,—

> "Je suis fils de Brutus, et je porte en mon cœur
> La liberté gravée et les rois en horreur."

It was easy to see, from the passion for republican institutions which seized even upon the highest classes, that the era of revolutions was not to be con-

fined to the New World. The philosophers of France used every method of flattery to bring over the young nobles to their side; and the profession of liberal opinions became as indispensable a passport to the saloons of fashion as to the favour of the people. Even in foreign courts the same sentiments were rapidly gaining ground, from the extreme interest taken in the American contest; and Ségur found at St Petersburgh his decoration of the republican order of Cincinnatus more an object of envy than any which he had obtained from the European monarchs. Emperors, kings, and nobles, seemed at that period to have combined with a view to establish a new order of things, from the extravagant eulogiums they pronounced on philosophers and liberal opinions; and it was only after having themselves erected the fabric, that they strove to pull it down,—forgetting that the human mind, like time, is always advancing, and never recedes. They were astonished when they found that men had discernment enough to apply to them the principles they had inculcated in regard to others. La Fayette was hailed as a hero, a divinity, so long as he supported the cause of Transatlantic independence; but he was stigmatized as a rebel, when he endeavoured to maintain the same principles in support of European freedom.[1] CHAP. II.

[1] Lab. ii. 2, 3. Ségur, i. 189, 252, 255; ii. 46; iii. 38, 50.

So many causes of disaffection did not come all at once into action; many of them had been long in operation. The increasing intelligence and freer spirit of the age successively made them the objects of popular complaint. During the whole reign of Louis XV., the discontents of the people were gradually increasing, and it was already foreseen that the reign of his successor would be one of anxiety and trouble. 1760 to 1778.

CHAP. II. "I have had great difficulty," said Louis XV., "in extricating myself from the quarrels with the parliaments during my whole reign; but let my grandson take care of them, for it is more than probable they will endanger his crown." In truth, during the latter part of the eighteenth century, and particularly subsequent to the peace of 1763, a growing discontent constantly prevailed in the nation; headed, in the first instance, by a portion of the noblesse, who were impelled by the force of public opinion, or dazzled by the desire of popular applause, and augmented latterly by the numberless faults of the government and the corrupt effeminacy of the court.[1]

[1] De Staël, i. 43.

Character of Louis XVI.

Of all the monarchs who ever sat upon the French throne, Louis XVI. was the one least calculated to provoke, and least fitted to subdue, a revolution. Firm in principle, pure in morals, humane in feeling, beneficent in intention, he possessed all the qualities calculated to adorn a pacific throne, or which are amiable and estimable in private life; but he had neither the genius to prevent, nor the firmness to resist a revolution. Many of his qualities were calculated to have allayed the public discontents; none to have stifled them. The people were tired of the arbitrary powers of their monarch, and he was disposed to abandon them;—they were provoked at the expensive corruptions of the court, and he was both innocent in his manners and unexpensive in his habits;—they demanded reformation in the administration of affairs, and he placed his chief glory in yielding to the public voice. Such was his anxiety to outstrip the general desire for reforms, that he caused a box to be placed at the gate of his palace, to receive suggestions from all persons who might concur in the same views. But, in accomplishing great changes in society, it is

not only necessary to concede to one party, but to restrain their violence and control another; and the difficult task awaited the French monarch, of either compelling the nation to submit to abuses, or the aristocracy to agree to innovation. To accomplish either of these objects required more firmness and decision of character than he possessed. Irresolution was his great defect; and hence in difficult periods his conduct vacillated between the nobility and the people, and led both parties to abandon his interests: the first, because they distrusted his constancy—the last, because they were doubtful of his sincerity. His reign, from his accession to the throne down to the meeting of the States-General, was nothing but a series of ameliorations, without calming the public effervescence; of concessions, which only added to the ambition of the people. He had the misfortune to wish sincerely for the public good, without possessing the firmness requisite to secure it; and with truth it may be said, that reforms were more fatal to him than the continuance of abuses would have been to another sovereign.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 12, 13. Thiers, i. 6, 8. Lab. ii. 4, 5.

Ministry of Maurepas.

The choice which he made, on his accession to the throne, of Maurepas for prime minister, was in every point of view prejudicial to his reign. This old man, though not destitute of good qualities, was in no respect adapted for the duties of a minister in arduous times. He accustomed the King to half measures and a system of temporization, and contributed early to fix that character of irresolution upon his proceedings, which was too much the defect of his own disposition. Having suffered a banishment of nearly twenty years from court, in consequence of some satirical verses on Madame de Pompadour, he returned to power with no other principle but that of main-

CHAP. II. 1781.

taining his ascendency. Frivolous in all his ideas of government, he neither formed his opinions of men by their conduct, nor of measures by their utility, but of both by their tendency to uphold his influence at court. His ideas were all half a century back; he was an old courtier of Versailles, but not a minister of France. The King intrusted him with the nomination of the ministry; and the choice which he made was determined less by any fixed plan, than the exigencies or inclination of the moment.[1]

[1] Thiers' Odoardo, i. 23, 24. Lab. ii. 8, 9. Boissy d'Anglas, ii. 37.

Turgot, Malesherbes, and Neckar, were successively called, at the King's desire, into the administration, and intrusted with the departments for which they were peculiarly qualified by their previous habits. The increasing weight of public opinion rendered it evident that some reforms were necessary, and these great men were selected to give some degree of consistency to the plans of amelioration. Malesherbes, descended from an eminent legal family, had inherited the virtues without the prejudices of his ancestors. His dispositions were as virtuous as his mind was free; oppression appeared to him as illegal as it was impolitic. His first condition on entering into the office of Minister of the Interior was, that the King should engage to sign no *lettre de cachet* but what he presented to him. He was a warm partisan of the liberty of the press, easy of access, tolerant and retiring in his habits, little qualified to shine at court, but eminently to inspire wisdom into the cabinet. He wished not to *extend* but to *restore* the rights of the nation—to concede to the accused the liberty of being defended by counsel—to the Protestants, perfect freedom of conscience—to all, personal freedom. With these views, he supported the abolition of torture, the re-enactment of the Edict of Nantes, the suppression of letters de cachet, and the removal of the censorship

Of Turgot, Neckar, and Malesherbes.

on the press. Turgot, endowed with greater powers and a firmer character, of whom Malesherbes said, "He has the head of Bacon and the heart of L'Hopital," aimed at still more extensive reforms. Profoundly versed in political science and every species of knowledge; esteemed equally for his great acquirements and his irreproachable manners; ardent in the pursuit of speculative improvement, and yet capable, as his administration of the province of Limousin demonstrated, of the most minute attention to practical matters, he was better fitted than any other man in existence, by salutary and cautious reforms, to have prevented the Revolution. He incessantly laboured to effect that which the Revolution ultimately completed, the suppression of every species of servitude and exclusive privilege. He proposed to free the labours of the peasantry from the burden of the corvée, internal communication from the barriers of the provinces, commerce from the duties of the interior; to subject all classes alike to the burden of the public taxes; accustom the people gradually, by the means of provincial parliaments, to the rights of freemen, and so prepare the way for the re-establishment of the States-General.[1]

Their proposed Reforms.

[1] Mig. i. 14. Lac. v. 25. Lab. ii. 14, 15, 27.

Neckar, a Genevese by birth, and a banker by profession, was called to the administration of the finances, from his high credit and acknowledged skill in money transactions. He was appointed to the ministry in order to exert his talents in procuring money for the court, and extricating the finances from their embarrassment; but, being strongly attached to the principles of freedom, he endeavoured to make the difficulties of the government the means of emancipating the people. His system was to face boldly the public accounts, to make no secret to the world

CHAP. II. 1781.

of the excess of the expenditure above the receipts, and to reduce them ultimately to a level by a rigid system of economy. He proposed to meet the public exigencies in ordinary periods by taxation, in extraordinary by loans; to familiarize the people to the former, by obtaining the consent of the provincial parliaments, and gain them over to the latter, by giving perfect publicity to the public accounts. Thus both parts of his system were favourable to the progress of freedom; the taxes by leading to the States-General, and the loans by compelling a publication of the accounts; the former by establishing a legal organ for popular influence, the latter by opening a channel for public opinion. His private character was unexceptionable. Possessed of immense wealth, he made a noble use of it; liberal, without either pride or prodigality, he would have been a perfect private citizen, had it not been for a vein of ostentation[1] and a secret vanity, which afterwards, by making him sacrifice every thing to his love of popularity, brought unheard-of disasters on the monarchy.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 16. Lac. v. 25, 52. Lab. ii. 33.

Opposed by Nobles.

But great as were the talents, sincere the intentions, unbending the probity, of these eminent men, they were unable to carry into effect the reforms which they so anxiously strove to introduce. So many of the influential classes of society were interested in the preservation of the abuses—so many of the nobility exerted their influence to procure the dismissal of ministers who proposed their abolition—the public voice was as yet so feebly heard within the precincts of the palace, that the King was unable to maintain them. Turgot had excited the jealousy of the courtiers by his reforms, of the parliaments by the abolition of the corvées, of Maurepas by his ascendant over the monarch. Beset on all sides,

Louis, against his better judgment, abandoned that virtuous minister, observing at the same time, that "Turgot, and he alone, loved the people." Neckar shortly after experienced the same fate. His economical plans had excited alarm among the courtiers; and the provincial assemblies had incurred the jealousy of the parliaments, who wished to monopolize the consequence arising from resistance to the court. Maurepas himself soon afterwards died, and the King, fatally for himself, fell under the influence of different counsels.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 16. Th. i. 7. Lac. v. 8. Lab. ii. 31.

The Queen, Marie Antoinette.

The Queen, Marie Antoinette, supplied the place of prime minister to the King, and succeeded to all the ascendency of her aged predecessor over his mind. Young, beautiful, high-spirited, and ambitious, she early acquired a lead at court which continued down to the overthrow of the throne. Her character was better suited for adversity than prosperity; in the arduous trials of her later years she evinced a courage and magnanimity worthy of the daughter of Maria Theresa, but in the early and prosperous period of her reign she mingled the love of power with the spirit of gaiety, and instead of firmly preparing for the storms which were approaching, made too much use of her influence to support men who were undermining alike her own happiness and the stability of the throne. She had little education, read hardly any thing but novels and romances, and had a fixed aversion, during her prosperous days, to every species of business or serious employment. Maurepas, who had acquired in early life an extreme distrust of courtier ministers, had always the merit at least of appointing popular statesmen; and though he had not the firmness to support them, when assailed by the privileged classes, their influence was

CHAP. II. 1781.

sufficient to prevent the increase of evil. But after his death the courtier administration made no attempt to check the progress of abuses. Many real grievances, such as the corvées and monopolies, which had been abolished, were restored; and the people, perceiving that the reforms meditated by their predecessors were abandoned, gave full vent to their feelings of discontent. From that moment the Revolution became inevitable: the return to abuses, after the taste for reforms has been introduced, is, in an age of intelligence, insupportable.[1]

[1] Th. i. 7. Lab. ii. 42, 43, 106. Lac. v. 8. Camp. i. 40, 41.

An unfortunate occurrence took place at this time, which, though trivial in itself, is well worthy of consideration, from the important effect which it had in swelling the tide of public discontent which was setting in so strongly against the throne. A diamond necklace of immense value, belonging to a jeweller of Paris, had been long desired by the Queen, though she had had the virtue to resist it when the King wished to make her a present of it on the birth of the Dauphin. On the 15th August, 1785, a letter was put into the King's hands, written by the Cardinal de Rohan, grand almoner, to the owner, in which he stated, falsely as it afterwards appeared, that it had been sent to her Majesty. The cardinal was in consequence arrested, and the affair gave rise to a trial, which acquired extraordinary publicity, and terminated in the punishment of Madame de Lamotte, the principal delinquent in the affair. This intrigue revived all the old stories, which the economy of recent years had somewhat lulled into oblivion, of the prodigality and extravagance of the court; and the Abbé TALLEYRAND PERIGORD, then a young man, but whose penetration nothing could escape, early discerned its importance.[2] "Attend narrowly,"

[2] Georgel, ii. 209. Lab. ii. 139.

he said, "to that miserable affair of the necklace; I should be nowise surprised if it overturned the throne." CHAP. I. 1784.

Vergennes was the minister selected by the court to revert to the old system, and he appointed Calonne minister of finance. Bold, inconsiderate, and enterprising, this statesman was in every respect the reverse of the cautious Genevese. Gifted with extraordinary powers of application, brilliant in conversation, fertile in resources, he was both qualified to form plans adapted to the emergency of the moment, and to give them an air of plausibility to the volatile and superficial. His system was to encourage industry by expenditure, to stifle discontent by prodigality: the parsimony of Neckar had ruined him with the courtiers; the extravagance of Calonne brought him into obloquy with the nation. But how clearly soever the people, who paid his expenses, perceived the delusive nature of his measures, the courtiers, who profited by them, vehemently supported him. The Queen was captivated by the splendour of his fêtes;* the nobles by the magnitude of his pensions; even the capitalists were deceived by the exactness with which he discharged the public engagements, and supposed his resources inexhaustible because his disposition to borrow appeared so. They did not perceive, what is generally the case with profuse statesmen, that his regularity in discharging old debts arose from the incessant contracting of new ones; and that the ultimate inability of the state to meet its engagements, was owing to the very same causes which for a limited period supported its credit. He continued the system of loans after

Vergennes, Minister. Calonne.

* To all the requests of the Queen he answered,—"If what your Majesty asks is possible, the thing is done; if it is impossible, it will be done." As in the days of Louis XIV., he thought the dignity of France depended entirely on the splendour of the court.—WEBER, *Memoirs*, i. 301.

CHAP. II. 1786.

the conclusion of the American war, and at length exhausted the credit which the judicious measures of Neckar had procured for the Government. In these circumstances it became necessary to have recourse to taxes; and for this purpose the *Notables*, or principal nobility of the kingdom, were convened; but a minister who had rested his popularity on what he gave, soon found his influence gone when he came to ask.[1]

[1] Lab. ii. 127. Mig. i. 18. De Staël, i. 110, 111, 113. Th. i. 9, 10.

Finances.

Composed entirely of the privileged classes, who had been accustomed to derive emolument from, not make sacrifices to the court, the Notables showed themselves little disposed to support the public exigencies. The state of the finances excited the utmost alarm. It appeared that since the retreat of Neckar in 1781, the Government had borrowed 1,646,000,000 francs, or L.64,000,000 sterling, and that the annual deficit of the revenue below the expenditure was at least 140,000,000 francs, or L.5,600,000.[2] This discovery was the signal of the ruin of Calonne. The consequences of his extravagance came at once upon his head, and he fell regretted by none but the creatures of his bounty.

[2] Thiers, i. 10. De Staël, i. 113. Comptes Rend. in 1788. Lab. ii. 156, 164.

Joining rashness to ignorance, the Archbishop of Toulouse used these remarkable expressions in dismissing the Notables, which subsequent events rendered so important and fatal in their operation. "Since one interest alone ought to animate the three orders of the state, each ought in the States-General to have an equal number of representatives. The two first wish to be united: by that means the Tiers Etat, secured in another assembly *of an equal number of voices as the clergy and nobles taken together*, need fear no derelictions of its interests. It is just, moreover, that that part of his Majesty's subjects, so numerous, so interesting, so worthy of protection,

should acquire at least by the number of its votes a counterpoise to the advantages which birth and wealth must necessarily give to the other orders. In conformity with this view his Majesty will direct that henceforth the States-General *shall vote, not by orders in separate houses, but by head.*" Such were the projects openly announced by the first minister of the crown. While these perilous projects were dispersed through the nation with the dissolution of the Notables, Malesherbes, who had been restored to the Ministry, was labouring to convince the cabinet that the only secure basis for a national representation was property, the true principle of representative governments, and which alone can render them either durable in their existence or beneficial in their effects, but which was then overlooked in the fervour of innovation, and is even at this day far from being so generally understood as its paramount importance deserves.[1]

[1] Boissy d'Anglas, ii. 276. Weber, i. 176. Lab. ii. 176, 178.

Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, the antagonist of Calonne in the assembly of Notables, succeeded him in the administration. But it was soon found that he had neither firmness enough to manage the assembly, nor ability adequate to the administration of the finances. He had activity without firmness, rashness without perseverance. He won the Queen by his talent for conversation and the brilliant style of his repartees, but he had none of the solid acquirements essential to a minister in troubled times. His character was a mixture of scepticism and Jesuitism: without having lost any of the casuistry of the schools, he had, to the scandal of the church, thrown himself into the arms of the philosophers and atheists of the day. Nor were his talents or conduct more considerable.[2] Bold before the commencement of his

Succeeded by Archbishop of Toulouse.

[2] Lac. v. 123. De Staël, i. 122. Mig. i. 19. Lab. ii. 169. Th. i. 12. Soulavie, vi. 36.

CHAP. II. 1787.

plans, but feeble in their execution, he lost every thing from his irresolution, his want of consideration, and his vacillation of conduct.

Assembly of Notables.

The assembly of Notables proved both parsimonious and refractory. They passed resolutions approving of the provincial assemblies of M. Neckar, fixing certain rules for the commerce of corn, the suppression of the corvées, and then dissolved. The members carried with them to every part of France the information they had received as to the embarrassment of the finances, the faults of the ministers, and the prodigality of the court. A spirit of resistance to the Government spread universally through the country; the magistrates and parliaments demanded openly a statement of the receipts and expenditure; and many officers of the army declared that they would not obey the orders of the King, if required to act against the supporters of the people. The Revolution commenced with the parliaments and privileged classes; they little foresaw the tremendous power of the torrent they were letting in upon the country. All the world was felicitating the King on the convocation of the Notables, as a sovereign remedy for all the evils of the state. Old Marshal Ségur was of an opposite opinion. "Tous les esprits," said he to Louis, "sont en fermentation; les Notables pourraient être que la graine des *Etats Généraux*. Et qui pourrait aujourd'hui en calculer les résultats?"[2]

[1] Ségur, iii. 70. Mig. i. 20. De Staël, i. 123. Lab. ii. 175.

The fermentation, however, which these hints, thrown out by such high authority, produced over the whole kingdom, soon became unbounded. In the parliaments, in particular, the effervescence was extreme. "You ask," said the Abbé Sabatier, counsellor of parliament, to the Parliament of Paris, "an account

of the receipts and expenditure of government, ('Des Etats;') you are mistaken in your object, it is the STATES-GENERAL ('Des Etats Généraux') which you require." This witty expression, thrown in at a period of uncommon excitement, powerfully contributed to the Revolution, by giving a definite and fixed object to the wishes of the people. The person who used it was sent to prison, but that only rendered the public enthusiasm the greater, and an occasion soon occurred which brought matters to a crisis.[1]

[1] De Staël, i. 123, 124. Mig. 20. Th. i. 14.

Brienne was afterwards under the necessity, from the exhausted state of the treasury, of proposing the imposition of two new taxes, one on stamps, another on territorial possessions. But the Parliament of Paris, animated by the support of the public, and encouraged in their resistance by the almost unanimous voice of the nation, refused to register them; a solemnity indispensable by the French law to the legality of the impost. The resistance of the parliaments was peculiarly formidable from their being composed of persons connected by birth or alliance with the greatest families in the kingdom. The King immediately banished them to Troyes, whence, after some time, they were brought back, on condition that the tax should be registered. But this was only the commencement of the strife. The increasing wants of the crown rendered it indispensable that several new imposts should be registered, and loans to the amount of 440,000,000 francs, or L.17,400,000 sterling, were dependent on their success. The Parliament of Paris refused to register them. Upon this the King had recourse to a bed of justice, and registered the edict of his own authority; proclaiming, at the same time, to pacify the public, the restitution of their rights to the Protestants,[2] the annual publica-

New taxes proposed.

[2] Mig. i. 20. De Staël, i. 124. Th. i. 15. Lab. ii. 180, 190, 220.

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tion of the Public Accounts, and the convocation of the States-General in five years.

Contests with the Parliaments.

But the public mind was now too much agitated to be satisfied with these concessions. The parliament continued its opposition, and still refused to register the edict. Measures of severity were again resorted to; some of its members, including the Duke of Orleans, immediately, exiled. The parliament upon this published an arrêt, protesting against lettres de cachet, and demanding the recall of its members; the arrêt was annulled by the King, and confirmed by the parliament. In this contest the Parliament of Paris were supported by all the magistracy of France. The movement became universal, the passion for freedom indescribable. All classes joined in the general enthusiasm; many of the nobles, most of the clergy, united in demanding the States-General. Placing itself at the head of the national movement, the Parliament of Paris sacrificed its own powers to the nation, and solemnly declared that it had no right to register taxes, and protesting against arbitrary imprisonments, demanded a regular convocation of the same national assembly. This courageous act was followed by a decree declaring its members immovable, and all acts illegal, of those who should usurp its place. The King arrested and banished Fretau and Sabatier to the Isles of Hyeres, and the Duke of Orleans to Villers Cotteret. But this imprudent measure had no tendency to subdue the ferment of the nation. The Revolution was now become inevitable; the concurring voice of all classes loudly demanded the national estates.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 21. Th. i. 16, 18. Lab. ii. 180, 200, 215. De Staël, i. 124, 125.

Brienne, perceiving that the opposition of the parliament was systematic, and was renewed at every suc-

cessive demand of a subsidy, or of the sanctioning of a loan, resolved to adopt a general measure, calculated to extinguish all resistance in future. With this view, he resolved to strip the body of all but its judicial functions, and assumed Lamoignon, an intrepid man, to execute the difficult task. He executed the attempt with skill, but the court were mistaken in their calculation of the resistance they were to experience. A new organization of the parliaments was attempted. In one day all the magistracy of France were exiled to make way for the new establishment. The keeper of the seals deprived the Parliament of Paris of its political powers, to vest them in a *Cour Plenière* formed of the court party, and he placed its judiciary functions in the hands of the bailliages. The Parliament of Paris boldly protested against its dissolution; the King replied by arresting two of its members, D'Espremenil and Goeslard, in the middle of the Assembly; and three days afterwards, registered the edicts in a bed of justice. When the halberdiers entered the hall, no one would point out the objects of their search. "We are all D'Espremenils," said they from all sides; and it was the prisoners alone who delivered themselves up to the officers. But public opinion was too strong for so violent a step. The Court of Chatelet protested against the usurpation of the crown. Troubles broke out at the same time in Dauphiny, Bretagne, Provence, Flanders, Languedoc, and Bearn. The Ministry, instead of the organized resistance of the parliament, found themselves encountered by a more vehement and formidable opposition from the people. It was headed by the higher classes;—the noblesse, the commons, the provincial assemblies, and the clergy, joined in the demand. Pressed by the necessitous state of the exchequer,[1] Brienne convoked

Coup d'Etat of Brienne. May 5, 1788.

[1] Soulavie, vi. 205, 212, Lab. ii. 227, 264. Mig. i. 22. De Staël, i. 125. Th. i. 22, 23.

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an extraordinary assembly of the clergy; but the first thing they did was to vote an address to the King, demanding the abolition of the *Cour Plenière*, and the immediate convocation of the States-General, as the only means of re-establishing the public credit, and terminating the distressing conflicts of royal and judicial authority.

Agrees to convoke the States-General.

Driven to extremities, Brienne, as a last resource, agreed to convoke the States-General. But this resolution proved his ruin. He had been called to the helm of affairs to remedy the distresses of the government, he had succeeded only in plunging them deeper into difficulties: he found the court involved only in pecuniary embarrassments, he left it engaged in the still more serious contests of power. He rendered inevitable, what was deemed by the court the worst possible method of avoiding the public difficulties, the convocation of the States-General.[1] The immediate cause of his ruin was the suspension of the payment of the public rentes, which amounted to a declaration of national bankruptcy.[2] His administration has been much decried, because, during its subsistence, the public calamities commenced; but, if he had possessed the ability of Sully, or the sagacity of Richelieu, the result would have been the same. The period had arrived when the public exigencies absolutely required a supply of money, and when it could be procured only by redressing the public grievances.[3]

[1] Th. i. 23.

[2] De Staël, i. 127. Th. i. 24.

[3] De Staël, i. 125, 126.

The court, assailed in so many quarters, took the bold resolution of convoking the States-General, in the hope that the Tiers Etat would defend the throne against the legal, as their ancestors had against the feudal aristocracy. Passing suddenly from one extreme to another, they not only pressed the convocation of the Estates, and prescribed the mode of their

assembly, but invited the learned bodies and popular writers to give their advice on the subject; and at the same time that the clergy declared in a body that it was necessary to accelerate the period of its meeting, the King fixed their convocation at an earlier date than any one anticipated.[1]

July 15.

[1] Th. i. 23. Lab. ii. 266, 267.

The most vehement fermentation instantly seized the public mind; social regeneration became the order of the day; the ardent and philanthropic were seduced by the brilliant prospects of unbounded felicity which appeared to be opening upon the nation, the selfish entranced by the hope of individual elevation in the midst of the general confusion. Thousands of political pamphlets inundated the country; politics were discussed in every society; an universal enthusiasm seized the nation. But though all classes were unanimous in desiring the convocation of the States-General, and the commencement of the public reforms, they differed widely in the measures which they deemed likely to advance the public welfare, and already were to be seen the seeds of those divisions which afterwards deluged the monarchy with blood. The higher classes of the noblesse, and all the prelates, desired the maintenance of the separation of the three orders, and the preservation of their exclusive privileges; the philosophic party, from whom the Girondists afterwards sprung, considered the federal republics of America as a model of government; while the few cautious observers, whom the general whirl had left in the nation, in vain suggested, that as they were about to embark on the dark and unknown sea of innovation, the British constitution was the only haven in which they could hope to find a secure asylum.[2]

[2] Lab. ii. 267, 268.

CHAP. II. 1788. In consequence of this change in the administration and royal designs, the convocation of the Estates was fixed in August 1788, for the 1st May, 1789. Neckar was recalled, the parliament re-established, the *Cour Plenière* abolished, the provinces satisfied, and every thing prepared for the election of the members of the States-General.[1]

Aug. 1788.

[1] Mig. i. 24. Th. i. 23.

This great victory had been gained by the united efforts of all classes; the nobles had supported the Tiers Etat, and the clergy had been almost unanimous on the same side; but, as usual on such occasions, divisions were consequent on success. The separate interests of the different bodies who had combined in the struggle, appeared when it was over. Each of the three bodies had entertained different views in demanding the States-General. The parliaments had hoped to rule them as in their last assemblage in 1614; the nobles expected, by the convocation of this body, to regain their lost influence; the Tiers Etat to rise into political importance. These discordant views immediately were supported by their respective adherents, and divisions broke out between the three Estates.[2]

[2] De Staël, i. 126. Mig. i. 24. Th. i. 27.

Division of the popular party.

The commons vehemently maintained that the vast increase in the numbers and consideration of their body since the last assemblage of the Estates in 1614, rendered it indispensable that a great addition should be made to the number of their representatives; that many places, formerly of no moment, had risen into opulence and importance within the last two centuries, who were wholly without representatives; that no national assembly could rest on a secure basis, which was thus rested only on a partial representation; that the light of the age was adverse

to the maintenance of feudal distinctions, and that the only way to prevent a revolution was to concede in time the just demands of the people. On the other hand, the Parliament of Paris, the nobles, and privileged classes, alleged, that the only way to prevent innovation was to adhere to the practice of the constitution; that no human wisdom could foresee the effect of any considerable addition to the representatives of the people; and that if such a deviation from established usage could ever be expedient, the last time when it should be attempted was in a moment of great public excitement, when the object of political wisdom should be to moderate rather than increase the ambition of the lower orders.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 25. Th. 27, 28. De Staël, i. 125.

A pamphlet published at this period, by the Abbé Siêyes, under the title, "Qu'est ce le Tiers Etat?" had a powerful influence on the future destinies of France. "The Tiers Etat," said he, "is the French nation, *minus* the noblesse and the clergy." Public opinion ran daily more strongly in favour of the commons; extravagant expectations began to be formed; visionary schemes to be published, and that general unhinging of opinions took place which is the surest prelude of a revolution. Brienne, by order of the King, issued an invitation to all the writers of France to publish their sentiments on the formation of the approaching States-General; the country was immediately deluged with pamphlets, many written with great talent, others indulging in the most chimerical projects. Every thing tended to increase the public effervescence, and to disqualify men from forming a rational judgment on public affairs.[2]

[2] Lab. ii. 312. De Staël, i. 169, 170.

Upon Neckar's return to the administration, he found only 250,000 francs, or L.11,000, in the royal treasury. On the following day he received nume-

Neckar's Return.

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rous tenders of loans, and the public funds rose at once 30 *per cent.* The public creditors were then alive only to the danger of national bankruptcy which arose from the perfidy or extravagance of kings; they had yet to learn the far more imminent peril which springs from the violence and vacillation of the people. He immediately recalled all persons exiled for political offences, and strove to the utmost to assuage individual distress. But it was too late. When he received the intimation of his recall, his first words were, "Ah! would that I could recall the fifteen months of the Archbishop of Toulouse!" In truth, during those eventful years, the period of safe concession was gone by; every point now abandoned was adding fuel to the flame.[1]

[1] De Staël, i. 157, 159.

Neckar doubles the Tiers Etat.

Neckar, yielding to the force of democratic ambition, had secretly resolved to *double* the numbers of the Tiers Etat in the approaching assembly; but, in order to feel his way with the public, and throw the responsibility of so great a change off himself, he convoked the Notables of the kingdom; but they rejected the proposal. The danger, on the eve of a political crisis, of adding so much suddenly to the power of the ambitious commons, was distinctly perceived. One bureau alone, headed by Monsieur, afterwards Louis XVIII., reported that it should be conceded.* Finding that the object could not be gained in this way, and apprehensive, it is said, that if the people were irritated by its refusal, they would return even a greater number of deputies to the assembly, he prevailed on the King's Council to authorize it.[2] At the same time, he procured the admission of the *curés*

[2] De Staël, i. 170, 171. Lab. ii. 325–6. Mig. i. 25. Th. i. 29. Dec. 27, 1788.

* This resolution was carried by the single casting-vote of that prince. When it was reported to Louis XVI., he immediately said, "Let them add mine, I give it willingly."—LABAUME, ii. 323.

into the body of the clergy—a measure which gave as great an accession to the popular party in their order.* CHAP. I. 1788.

The elections soon after commenced, and, as might have been expected, almost all terminated in favour of the popular party. They were carelessly conducted by the constituted authorities; the Crown made no attempt to influence the returns; the importance of attending to the quality of those who exercised the elective franchise was not understood; and, after a few days, every person decently dressed was allowed to vote without any questions being asked:—upwards of three millions of electors concurred in the formation of the Assembly. The parliaments had little influence in the choice of the deputies, the court none; the noblesse chose a few popular persons of their rank, but the great bulk of their representatives were firmly attached to the interests of their order, and as hostile to the Tiers Etat as to the oligarchy of great Elections.

* Nothing can be more instructive than to review the arguments by which this able and good, but mistaken, man supported this great and decisive addition to the popular influence. He rested his opinion on the unanimity expressed on this point in all the petitions to the King from the towns and municipalities of the kingdom, on the general concurrence of the writers who had published their opinions, and on the recent decisions of the division of the parliaments—"All hope," said he, "of a successful issue would be lost, if it were made to depend on establishing harmony between three orders essentially at variance in their principles and interest. To put an end to the injustice of pecuniary privileges, and maintain a proper equilibrium between the Tiers Etat and the other orders, we must give it a double representation; without that, there would always be a majority of two to one against them: whereas, when compelled to look to common interests, they will only adopt the laws which impose the least burden upon the community, and will thus compel the Tiers Etat to accept the imposts which at present they deem most onerous. We ascribe too much importance to this last order. The Tiers Etat, by their nature and their occupations, must *ever be strangers to political passions.* Their intelligence and goodness of disposition are a sufficient guarantee against all the apprehensions at present entertained of their excesses."—NECKAR, *Memoirs*, i. 175, 180, *and* LABAUME, ii. 326, 327.

CHAP. II. 1788. families who composed the court. The clergy named deputies attached to the cause of freedom, and the bishops those likely to uphold the hierarchy. Finally, the Tiers Etat chose a numerous body of representatives, firm in their attachment to liberty, and ardently desirous of extending the influence of their order.[1]

[1] Th. i. 26. Dumont, 57.

Every thing contributed at this period to swell the torrent of popular enthusiasm. The minds of men, strongly agitated by the idea of an approaching revolution, were in a continual ferment; the parliaments, nobles, and dignified clergy, who had headed the movement, already saw themselves assailed by the arms which they had given to the people.[2] In Brittany, the nobles, indignant at the duplication of the Tiers Etat, against which they had strongly protested, withdrew from the elections, and named no deputies to the assembly; an imprudent defection, attended with fatal effects to the cause of order in after time.[3] Even the elements contributed to swell the public discontent, and seemed to have declared war on the falling monarchy. A dreadful storm of hail, in July 1788, laid waste the provinces, and produced such a diminution in the harvest, as threatened all the horrors of famine; while the severity of the succeeding winter exceeded any thing that had been experienced since that which followed the disasters of Louis XIV. The charity of Fénélon, which immortalized that disastrous epoch, was now equalled by the humane beneficence of the clergy of Paris; but all their efforts could not keep pace with the immense mass of indigence, which was swelled by the confluence of dissolute and abandoned characters from every part of France. These wretches assembled round the throne, like the sea-birds round the wreck, which are the harbingers of death to the sinking mariner,[4] and

[2] Th. i. 36.

[3] Ib. Lac. vii. 6, 7.

[4] Th. i. 36, 37. Lac. vi. 6, 7. Pr. Hist. i. 290–1.

already appeared in fearful numbers in the streets on occasion of the slightest tumult. They were all in a state of destitution, and for the most part owed their life to the charity of the ecclesiastics, whom they afterwards massacred in cold blood in the prison of Carmes.

Effect of these concessions.

The effect of these measures of M. Neckar is thus described by the man of all others who gained most by the Revolution, Napoleon Bonaparte. "The concessions of Neckar were the work of a man ignorant of the first principles of the government of mankind. It was he who overturned the monarchy, and brought Louis XVI. to the scaffold. Marat, Danton, Robespierre himself, did less mischief to France; he brought on the Revolution, which they consummated. Such reformers as M. Neckar do incredible mischief. The thoughtful read their works; the populace are carried away by them; the public happiness is in every mouth; and soon after, the people find themselves without bread; they revolt, and society is overturned. Neckar was the author of all the evils which desolated France during the Revolution; all the blood that was shed rests on his head."[1]

[1] Bour. viii. 109.

Making every allowance for the despotic feelings which so strongly characterised the French Emperor, it is impossible to deny that there is much truth in these observations. Admitting that a struggle was inevitable, the question remains, Was it expedient to make so extraordinary an addition to the *powers* of the people at such a crisis; to double the number of the popular representatives on the eve of a conflict? The result proved that it was not. It was intended to conciliate; it had the effect of alienating:—it was meant to attach the people to the throne; it made them combine for its overthrow:—it was designed to

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produce oblivion of past injury; it induced ambition of future elevation.

Timely concession, it is frequently said, is the only way to prevent a revolution. The observation is just in one sense, but unjust in another; and it is by attending to the distinction between the two great objects of popular ambition, that the means can alone be attained of allaying public discontent, without unhinging the frame of society.

Distinction between freedom and democracy.

There is, in the first place, the love of freedom, that is, of immunity from personal restriction, oppression, or injury. This principle is perfectly innocent, and never exists without producing the happiest effects. Every concession which is calculated to increase this species of liberty, is comparatively safe in all ages and in all places.

But there is another principle, strong at all times, but especially to be dreaded in moments of excitement. This is the principle of democratic ambition; the desire of exercising the powers of sovereignty; of sharing in the government of the state. This is the dangerous principle; the desire not of exercising industry without molestation, but of exerting power without control.

The first principle will only produce disturbances when real evils are felt; and with the removal of actual grievance, tranquillity may be anticipated. The second frequently produces convulsions, independent of any real cause of complaint; or, if it has been excited by such, it continues after they have been removed. The first never spreads by mere contagion; the second is frequently most virulent when the disease has been contracted in this manner.

In moments of political agitation, it should be the object of the statesman to remove all real causes of

complaint, but firmly resist all rapid encroachments of popular ambition. All restrictions upon personal liberty, industry, or property; all oppressive taxes; all odious personal distinctions—should be abandoned; all prosecutions calculated to inflame the passions, and convert a demagogue into a martyr, should be avoided. If punishment is required, the mildest which the case will admit should be chosen; in selecting the species of prosecution, the least vindictive should be preferred. The inflicting of death should, above all things, be shunned, unless for crimes which public feeling has stigmatized as worthy of that penalty. But having conceded thus much to the principles of justice, and the growth of freedom, all attempts at a sudden increase of the power of the people should be steadily opposed, and nothing conceded which tends to awaken the passion of democracy.

Effect of Neckar's concessions.

In so far as Neckar and Turgot laboured to relieve the real evils of France; in so far as they sought to re-establish the finances, curb the powers of the nobles, emancipate the industry of the peasants, purify the administration of justice, their labours were wise and beneficial, and they did all that men could do, to terminate the oppression, and avert the disasters, of their country. In so far as they yielded to public clamour, and conceded unnecessarily to the ambition of the people; in so far as they departed, with undue rapidity, from ancient institutions to acquire temporary popularity, they deserve the censure of posterity, and are answerable for all the disasters which ensued.

The talent of using political power so as not to abuse it, is one of the last acquisitions of mankind, and can be gained only by many ages of protected industry, and experienced freedom. It can never

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with safety be extended to the great body of the people, and least of all, to a nation just emerging from the fetters of servitude: unless the growth of political influence in the lower orders has been as gradual as the changes of time, or the insensible extension of day in spring, it will infallibly destroy the personal freedom which constitutes its principal object. A certain intermixture of the democratic spirit is often indispensable to the extrication of individual liberty, just as a certain degree of warmth is requisite to vivify and cherish animal life; but, unless the fire is restrained within narrow limits, it will consume those who are exposed to its fierceness, not less in political than private life.

The love of real freedom may always be distinguished from the passion for popular power. The one is directed to objects of practical importance, and the redress of experienced wrongs; the other aims at visionary improvement, and the increase of democratic influence. The one complains of what has been felt, the other anticipates what may be gained; disturbances arising from the first subside, when the evils from which they spring are removed; troubles originating in the second magnify with every victory which is achieved. The experience of evil is the cause of agitation from the first; the love of power the source of convulsions from the last. Reform and concessions are the remedies appropriate to the former; steadiness and resistance the means of extinguishing the flame arising from the latter. The passion of love is not more dependent on the smiles of beauty, than the passion of democracy on the hope of successive augmentations of power.

It is the intention of Nature, that the power of the people should increase as society advances; but

it is not her intention that this increase should take place in such a way as to convulse the state, and ultimately extinguish their own freedom. All improvements that are really beneficial, all changes which are destined to be lasting, are gradual in their progress. It is by suddenly increasing the power of the lower orders that the frame of society is endangered, because the immediate effect of such a change is to unsettle men's minds, and bring into full play the most visionary and extravagant ideas of the most desperate and ambitious men. Such an effect was produced in France by the duplication of the Tiers Etat in 1788; and similar consequences will, in all ages, be found to attend the concession of great political powers, at a period of more than ordinary political excitation.*

Revolution headed by Higher Classes.

"No Revolution," says Madame de Staël, "can succeed in a great country, unless it is commenced by the aristocratical class; the people afterwards get possession of it, but they cannot strike the first blows. When I recollect that it was the parliaments, the nobles, the clergy, who first strove to limit the royal authority, I am far from intending to insinuate that their design in so doing was culpable. A sincere enthusiasm then animated all ranks of Frenchmen; public spirit had spread universally, and among the higher classes, the most enlightened and generous, were those who ardently desired that public opinion should have its due sway on the direction of affairs. But can the privileged ranks, who commenced the

* This distinction coincides with that which is drawn by the Viscount St Chamans, in his late able and eloquent pamphlet on the Revolution of 1830, between *personal* and *political* freedom. It lies at the foundation of all rational discussion on this vital subject.—See ST CHAMANS, 67, 68.

CHAP. II. 1789. Revolution, accuse those who only carried it on? Some will say, we wished only that the changes should proceed a certain length; others, that they should go a step farther; but who can regulate the impulse of a great people when once put in motion?"[1] A heavy responsibility attaches to those of the higher ranks, who, during periods of agitation, support the demands of the populace for a sudden increase of power, instead of directing their desires to what may really benefit them, the redress of experienced evils. On their heads rest all the disasters and bloodshed which necessarily follow in their train. It is difficult to say which are most worthy of reprobation; the haughty aristocrats, who resist every attempt at practical improvement when it can be done with safety, or the factious demagogues, who urge on additions to popular power when it threatens society with convulsions. The true patriot is the reverse of both; he will, in every situation, attach himself to the party which resists the evils that threaten his country; in periods when liberty is endangered, he will side with the popular, in moments of agitation, support the monarchical party.

[1] Rév. Franç. i. 125.

CHAPTER III.

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.

ARGUMENT.

Elevated state of Science in France at the commencement of the Revolution—Rash innovations of the Constituent Assembly—Opening of the States-General—Speech of the King and Neckar—His ideas of the Revolution—Views of the Tiers Etat—And of the Nobles and dignified Clergy—And of the King—Neckar's duplication of the Tiers Etat—Violent opposition to it from the Nobles and Clergy—Remarkable Prophecy of Beau Regard—Composition of the Tiers Etat—Absence of Men of Literature and Philosophy, and great Proprietors—Great number of Lawyers—Efforts of Nobles and Court to sway the Assembly—Tiers Etat insist for one Assembly—Violent contests between them and the Nobles—They take the name of National Assembly—Dismay of the Nobles—Enthusiasm over the Country—Neckar proposes a mixed Constitution, like the English—Tennis Court Oath—Majority of the Clergy join the Tiers Etat—Royal Sitting of 23d June—Duke of Orleans and Forty-seven Nobles join the Tiers Etat—The King yields, and enjoins majority of Nobles to do the same—Immense effervescence in Paris—Revolt of the French Guards—Vigorous Measures resolved on by the Court—Change of Ministry—Military Preparations—Consternation of Paris on this—Troops revolt, and are withdrawn to Versailles—Dreadful Tumults in Paris—Storming of the Bastile—Cruelty of the Populace, and their enthusiasm—The King, being informed of it, yields, and visits Paris—Commencement of the emigration—Recall of Neckar, and flight of the Ministry—Excesses of the populace—Consequences of the popular triumph of National Guards—Feudal rights abandoned by the nobility—Anarchy in France, and famine in Paris—Consequences of this measure—Rights of man—Formation of the constitution, and question of the veto—Democratic state of Paris—State of the finances—Famine in the capital and provinces—Banquet at Versailles—Agitation and insurrection at Paris—State of the Assembly and Court—The mob invade Versailles, surround the palace, and nearly murder the King and Queen—Heroic conduct of the latter—Royal Family brought to Paris—Vast changes introduced by the Constituent Assembly—Faults on both sides—General reflections on the causes which precipitated the Revolution.

THE higher branches of science, says Plato, are not useful to all, but only to a few; general ignorance is neither the greatest evil, nor the most to be feared; a mass of ill-digested information is much more dan- CHAP. III. 1789.

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gerous.[1] A little knowledge, says Bacon, makes men irreligious; but profound thought brings them back to devotion. In the truths unfolded by these great men, are to be found the remote sources of the miseries of the French Revolution.

[1] Plato de Legibus, lib. vii.

Elevated state of science at date of Revolution.

Science had never attained a more commanding station than in France at the close of the eighteenth century: astronomy, investigated in its farthest recesses by the aid of mathematical calculations, had first of all the exact sciences been brought to perfection; the profound researches of her Geometricians had rivalled all but Newton's glory; while the talent of her Chemists, and the genius of her Naturalists, had explored the hidden processes of Nature, and made the remnants of animated life unfold the pristine order of creation. What then was wanting to fit her people for rational liberty, and qualify them for the exercise of the rights of freemen? A sense of religion, the habits of sober thought, and moderation of general opinion; and the want of these rendered all the others of no avail.

Rashness of Constituent Assembly.

History affords no example of an era in which innovation was so hastily pursued, and ambition so blindly worshipped; when the experience of ages was so haughtily rejected, and the fancies of the moment so rashly adopted; in which the rights of property were so scandalously violated, and the blood of the innocent so profusely lavished. If we trace these frightful disorders to their source, we shall find them all springing from the pride of a little knowledge; from historical analogies imperfectly understood, examples of antiquity rashly misapplied, dreams of perfection crudely conceived, speculations of the moment instantly acted upon. The danger of such proceedings had been repeatedly exposed; the

Annals of Tacitus, the Discourses of Machiavel, the Essays of Bacon, had long before illustrated them; but these, and all the other lessons of experience, were passed over with disdain, and every village politician who had dreamed of politics for a few months, deemed himself superior to the greatest men whom the world had ever produced. CHAP. III. 1789.

The great danger of setting the ideas of men afloat upon political subjects consists in the multitude who can think, compared to the few who can think correctly; in the rapidity with which the most stable institutions can be overturned, compared with the excessive slow rate at which they can be restored. Every man can speak of politics; there is not one in ten who can understand them: every man flatters himself he knows something of history; to be qualified to reason on it correctly, requires the incessant study of half a lifetime. But unfortunately the knowledge of the difficulty of the subject, and of the extensive information which it requires, is one of the *last* acquisitions of the human mind; none are so rash as those who are least qualified to govern; none so really worthy of the lead, as those who are least desirous to assume it. Peril of innovation.

The 5th of May, 1789, was the day fixed for the opening of the States-General; that was the first day of the French Revolution. Opening of States-General.

On the evening before, a religious ceremony preceded the installation of the Estates. The King, his family, his ministers, and the deputies of the three orders, walked in procession from the church of Notre Dame to that of St Louis, to hear mass. The appearance of the assembled bodies, and the reflection that a national solemnity, so long fallen into disuse, May 4, 1789.

CHAP. III. 1789. was about to be revived, excited the most lively enthusiasm in the multitude. The weather was fine; the benevolent and dignified air of the King, the graceful manners of the Queen, the pomp and splendour of the ceremony, and the undefined hopes which it excited, exalted the spirits of all who witnessed it. But the reflecting observed with pain, that the sullen lines of feudal etiquette were preserved with rigid formality, and they augured ill of the national representation which commenced its labours with such distinctions. First marched the clergy in grand costume, with violet robes; next the noblesse, in black dresses, with gold vests, lace cravats, and hats adorned with white plumes; last, the Tiers Etat, dressed in black, with short cloaks, muslin cravats, and hats without feathers.* But the friends of the people consoled themselves with the observation, that however humble their attire, the numbers of this class greatly preponderated over those of the other orders.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 30. Th. i. 43.

Hardly any of the deputies had hitherto acquired great popular reputation. One alone attracted general attention. Born of noble parents, he had warmly espoused the popular side, without losing the pride of aristocratic connexion. His talents universally known, and his integrity generally suspected, rendered him the object of painful anxiety; harsh and disagreeable features, a profusion of black hair, and a commanding air, attracted the curiosity even of those who were unacquainted with his reputation. His name was MIRABEAU, future leader of the Assembly.[2]

[2] Mad. de Staël, i. 186.

Two ladies of rank from a gallery, with very dif-

* It was observed that the Duke of Orleans, who walked last, as of highest rank among the nobles, lingered behind, and was surrounded by the dense masses of the Tiers Etat, who immediately followed.

ferent feelings, beheld the spectacle. The one was Madame de Montmorin, wife of the minister of foreign affairs; the other the illustrious daughter of M. Neckar, Madame de Staël. The latter exulted in the boundless prospect of national felicity which seemed to be opening under the auspices of her father. "You are wrong to rejoice," said Madame de Montmorin; "this event forebodes much misery to France and to ourselves." Her presentiment turned out too well-founded: she herself perished on the scaffold with one of her sons; another was drowned; her husband was massacred in the prisons on September 2d; her eldest daughter was cut off in jail; her youngest died of a broken heart, before she had attained the age of thirty years.[1]

[1] Mad. de Staël, i. 187.

On the following day the Assembly was opened with extraordinary pomp. Galleries, disposed in the form of an amphitheatre, were filled with a brilliant assembly of spectators; the deputies were introduced and arranged according to the order established in the last Convocation in 1614. The clergy sat on the right, the nobles on the left, the commons in front of the throne. Loud applauses followed the entry of the popular leaders, especially those who were known to have contributed to the convocation of the states. M. Neckar, in particular, was distinguished by the reception which he experienced. After the ministers and deputies had taken their places, the King appeared, followed by the Queen, the princes, and a brilliant suite. The monarch placed himself upon his throne, amidst the loudest applause, and the three orders at the same instant rose and covered themselves.[2] The days were past when the third estate remained uncovered, and spoke only on their knees;

May 5, 1789.

[2] Mig. i. 31. Th. i. 43.

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that first spontaneous movement was ominous of the subsequent conduct of that aspiring body.

Speech of the King.

"Gentlemen," said the monarch, with emotion, "the day which my heart so long desired is at length arrived; I find myself surrounded by the representatives of the nation, which it is my first glory to command. A long period has elapsed since the last convocation of the States-General; and although the meeting of these assemblies was thought to have fallen into desuetude, I have not hesitated to re-establish an usage from which the kingdom may derive new force, and which may open to its inhabitants hitherto unknown sources of prosperity." He concluded with these words:—"Every thing which can be expected from the warmest solicitude for the public welfare—every thing that can be expected from a king, the firmest friend of his people, you may expect from me. May unanimity prevail among you, and this epoch become for ever memorable in the annals of French prosperity!" These sentiments excited at first the warmest expression of gratitude; but, on reflection, the deputies observed with regret, that nothing tangible was proposed by the crown, and that expressions on the necessity of raising money, and the unsettled state of the public mind was all that followed from these intentions. The speech of M. Neckar was anxiously looked for, as explaining the real sentiments of the court; but it was long and undecided, resembling rather the exposition of a cautious financier, than the harangue of a great statesman on the opening of a new political era.[1]

[1] Lac. Pr. Hist. i. 32. Th. i. 31, 44.

Neckar's ideas of the Revolution.

In truth, notwithstanding his great abilities, the Swiss minister mistook the signs of the times. Pressed by the needy state of the public treasury, his atten-

tion was exclusively fixed on the means of replenishing it. He persisted in considering the crisis as financial, when in truth it was social; as arising from embarrassments of government, when it really sprung from the growing importance of the people. He hoped to accommodate his measures to the public exigencies, without compromising or breaking with any party. He was aware that the ancient system of government could not be maintained, but he trusted that the divisions in the political parties would enable him to repair the machine without destroying it. By so doing he lost the confidence of all. Conciliatory measures are admirable, when they are founded on reforms which remove a practical evil; they are ruinous when they proceed on a balance of mutual jealousies, or a blind concession to popular menaces, and irritate all without attaching any.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 35.

Liberty and equality were the ideas predominant in the mind of the whole third estate, and of that large party of the clergy, who, emanating from its ranks, were identified with its interests. EQUALITY was the great object of their ambition, because the distinctions of rank were the evil which occasioned their discontents. It was not so much absolute freedom which they coveted, as equality of restraint, and the repeal of all those laws which threw its fetters with undue severity upon the lower classes. They would rather have had servitude in common with the privileged ranks, than freedom accompanied with those privileges which drew an impassable line between them. The passion for distinction, as Napoleon afterwards observed, is the ruling principle in France; equality was demanded because it promised to remove the load which depressed the buoyant ambition of the middling and lower orders of society.[2]

Of the Tiers Etat.

[2] Riv. 37, 48. Lac. i. 32. Nap. in Duchess of Abrantes, vii. 269, 270.

CHAP. III. 1789. Views of the nobles and higher clergy.

The greater part of the nobles were naturally desirous of maintaining the privileges which they inherited from their forefathers, and regarded as essential to the existence of government in modern times. Their interests in this, as in most other cases, determined their inclinations, and they were resolved to resist any innovations which threatened to subvert their exclusive advantages. The higher classes of the clergy shared the sentiments of the noble families from which they sprung, and were equally anxious to maintain the privileges from which they derived advantage; but the great body of the undignified ecclesiastics, who were indignant at their exclusion from all situations of consideration or emolument in the church, participated in the feelings of the third estate, with whom they were more immediately in contact, and might be expected, on any serious struggle, to join their ranks.[1]

[1] Riv. 8. Lac. vii. 9, 10, 11.

Taken as a body, the clergy had supported all the efforts of the people for the establishment of their liberties. The vast proportion of their numbers, who were humble curés, destitute of any property, was a sufficient security that this would be the case. They had urged the convocation of the States-General; the clergy of Rheims, with their archbishop at their head, demanded, in their instructions to their representatives, the establishment of a national code, containing the fundamental laws of the monarchy, the regular assembly of the States-General, the right of taxing themselves, the establishment of personal freedom, security to property, the responsibility of ministers, open eligibility to all the citizens to all employments, a new civil and military code, uniformity of weights and measures, and the abolition of the slave trade. All the other instructions of the

clergy to their representatives contained more or less the same sentiments. It was at a later period in the Revolution, and in consequence of the treachery and injustice with which they were assailed, that this great body became the lasting and inveterate enemy of the Revolution.[1] CHAP. III. 1789.

[1] Chateaubriand, xix. 344. Burke, v. 99.

The King, who had never tasted one moment of repose since his accession to the throne, had been induced, by financial embarrassments, to convoke the States-General, and looked forward to their assembling as the termination of his difficulties. He, in truth, loved his people, and expected to meet their representatives with the tenderness of a parent who rejoins his long-lost children. He believed himself beloved, because he deserved to be so. Unhappily, it was the fashion to laugh at the idea of a revolution; reposing under the shadow of the monarchy, men shut their eyes to the possibility of its overthrow, and deemed present institutions stable, because they had never seen them shaken. They had yet to learn that no reliance is to be placed on the affections of mankind when their interests are at stake; that the force of ancient recollections, strong in periods of tranquillity, is frequently lost in moments of danger; and that attachment to old institutions is powerful only in those who have shared in their protection.[2]

The King's opinion on the subject.

[2] Lac. vii. 9. Th. i. 41.

M. Neckar had adopted two principles very generally received at that period, but of which subsequent experience has amply demonstrated the fallacy; viz. that public opinion is always on the side of wisdom and virtue, and that he could at pleasure sway its impulses.[3] The principle, *vox populi vox Dei*, doubtful at all times, is totally misplaced in periods of agitation, when the passions are let loose, and the ambition of the reckless is awakened by the possi-

[3] Lac. vii. 8, 9. De Staël, i. 280.

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bility of elevation. Public opinion in the end will always incline to the right side; but, in the violence of its previous oscillations, the whole fabric of society may be overthrown. The mariner who descries a coming storm, may with certainty predict that its fury will ultimately be stilled; but he cannot be sure that his vessel will not previously be sunk in the waves.

Neckar's duplication of the Tiers Etat.

Proceeding on this principle, M. Neckar adopted the measure already mentioned, which was productive of more disastrous consequences than any single step in the whole history of the Revolution; the duplication of the number of deputies from the Tiers Etat.[1]

[1] Riv. 7. Lac. vii. 9. Mig. i. 23.

Violent opposition from the nobles and clergy.

This decisive step was not taken without the most violent opposition on the part of the privileged classes. They at once perceived that this great increase in the numbers of the third estate more than doubled their influence in the Assembly; and the most violent discontents were excited in all parts of France by so unexpected a measure in their favour. The prelates and dignified clergy felt the utmost disquietude at the number of curés and ecclesiastics of inferior rank, who attended them as members of the States-General. It was evident from their conversation, habits, and manners, that they participated in the feelings of the Tiers Etat, with whom they lived in constant communication; and that the unjust exclusion of the middling ranks from the dignities and emoluments of the church, had excited as much dissatisfaction in the ecclesiastical classes, as the invidious privileges of the noblesse had awakened in the laity.[2] Their subsequent junction gave the popular party an undisputed ascendency in the Assembly. It is by the union of the church and the throne that

[2] Riv. 9. Th. i. 29. Lac. vii. 9.

political institutions acquire stability; it was by their separation that they were overturned in France. CHAP. III 1789.

But it was not merely by the duplication of the Tiers Etat that Neckar prepared the overthrow of the monarchy. Effects not less prejudicial resulted from the extraordinary laxity which was observed in the formation of the Electoral Assemblies. The King had invited the whole citizens in benevolent and touching terms to concur in the choice of representatives,* and no restriction whatever was imposed on the persons who were to concur in the Primary Assemblies. It was merely provided that they were to choose the electors, and that the choice of the representatives should devolve on the delegates thus chosen, who were in no case to exceed two hundred in number in each bailiwick. Upwards of two millions of Frenchmen were admitted under this regulation to a privilege which substantially amounted to the power of choosing representatives; for the electors were nothing but delegates, who, in every instance, obeyed the directions of their con-

* The circular calling together the States-General bore,—"We have need of the concourse of our faithful subjects, to aid us in surmounting the difficulties arising from the state of the finances, and establishing, in conformity with our most ardent wish, a durable order in the parts of government which affect the public welfare. We wish that the three estates should confer together on the matters which will be submitted to their examination: they will make known to us the wishes and grievances of the people in such a way, that, by a mutual confidence, and exchange of kind offices between the king and people, the public evils should as rapidly as possible be remedied. For this purpose we enjoin and command that, immediately on the receipt of this letter, you proceed to elect deputies of the three orders, worthy of confidence from their virtues and the spirit with which they are animated, that the deputies should be furnished with powers and instructions sufficient to enable them to attend to all the concerns of the state, and introduce such remedies as shall be deemed advisable for the reform of abuses, and the establishment of a fixed and durable order in all parts of the government, worthy of the paternal affections of the King and of the resolutions of so noble an assembly."—CALONNE, 315; LAB. ii. 335.

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stituents. Finally, this immense body were intrusted with the important privilege of drawing up *cahiers*, or directions to their constituents in regard to the conduct they were to pursue on all the great questions which were to come before them.* These cahiers were absolute mandates, which the representatives bound themselves by a solemn oath to observe faithfully and support to the utmost of their ability.[1]

[1] Lab. ii. 336, 339.

Nor was this all. Not content with establishing an electoral system, which amounted almost to universal suffrage, and permitting these numerous electors to bind their representatives *à priori* by absolute mandates on all the questions which might occur, Neckar imposed no restraint whatever on the persons who were to be chosen as representatives. Neither property, nor age, nor marriage, were required as qualifications. Every Frenchman, of twenty-five years of age, domiciled in a canton, who paid the smallest sum in taxes, was declared eligible. The consequences were disastrous in the extreme. Youths, hardly escaped from school; lawyers unable to earn a livelihood in their villages; curates barely elevated either in income or knowledge above their humble flocks; physicians destitute of patients, barristers without briefs; the ardent, the needy, the profligate, the ambitious, were at once vomited forth from all quarters to cooperate in the reconstruction of the monarchy. Very few indeed of the Assembly were possessed of any property; fewer still of any knowledge. The only restraints on human passion, knowledge, age,

* The collection of these cahiers, in 66 volumes folio, is the most interesting and authentic monument which exists of the grievances which led to the Revolution. An abstract of this immense record has been published by Prudhomme, in 3 vols. 8vo; another by Grille, in 2 vols. 8vo.

property, and children, were awanting in the great majority of its members; they consisted almost entirely of ardent youths, who already thought themselves equal to Cicero, Brutus, or Demosthenes, or were resolutely bent on making their fortunes: they were elected by almost universal suffrage, and subjected to the most rigorous mandates from a numerous and ignorant constituency. And yet from such a body, all classes in France, with a few individual exceptions, expected a deliverance from the evils or difficulties with which they were surrounded, and a complete regeneration of society. The King, the Ministers, and courtiers, anticipated a liberation from the vexatious opposition of the Parliaments, and more ready submission from a body of men who were thought to be so ill calculated to combine as the Tiers Etat; the nobles, a restoration of order to the finances, and emancipation from the public difficulties by the confiscation of the church property; the commons, liberation from every species of restraint, and boundless felicity from the prospects which would open to them in the new state of society which was approaching. When hopes so chimerical are entertained by all classes of society, and a chaos of unanimity is produced, composed of such discordant interests, it may in general be concluded that a general infatuation has seized the public mind, and that great national calamities are at hand.[1]

[1] Lab. ii. 337, 350, 351.

The prelates sounded the alarm in the strongest terms on this portentous state of things. The torrent of irreligious opinions with which France had lately been deluged, had awakened a general belief amongst the reflecting part of the community that some terrible national catastrophe was at hand. The ex-Jesuit Beau Regard, when preaching before the court in Lent, pronounced, with an emphatic voice,

Remarkable prophecy of Beau Regard, May 20, 1789.

CHAP. III. 1789. these remarkable words, which subsequent events rendered prophetic:—"Yes! thy temples, O Lord, shall be destroyed; thy worship abolished; thy name blasphemed. But what do I hear, great God! to the holy strains which beneath sacred roofs arose in thy praise, shall succeed profane and licentious songs; the infamous rites of Venus shall usurp the place of the worship of the Most High; and she herself sit on the throne of the Holy of Holies, to receive the incense of her new adorers."[1] Who could have imagined that this was literally to be accomplished in four years within the cathedral walls of Notre Dame?

[1] Luc. vii. 11.

Composition of the Tiers Etat.

The Tiers Etat numbered among its members a great proportion of the talent, and almost all the energy, of France. The leading members of the bar, of the mercantile and medical classes, many of the ablest of the clergy, and almost all the delegates of the towns, were to be found in its ranks.

The bulk of the nation, even at Paris, looked forward to the States-General as a means of diminishing the imposts; the nobility hoped it would prove the means of re-establishing the finances and putting an end to the vexatious parsimony of later years; the citizens trusted it would remove the galling fetters to which they were still subjected; the fundholders, who had so often suffered from a breach of public faith, regarded it as a secure rampart against a national bankruptcy, an event which the magnitude of the deficit had led them seriously to apprehend. All classes were unanimous in favour of a change, from which all were equally destined to suffer.[2]

[2] Dumont, i. 38.

All who were conscious of talents which were unworthily depressed, who sought after distinction which the existing order of society prevented them

from obtaining, or who had acquired wealth without obtaining consideration, joined themselves to the disaffected. To those were added the unsettled spirits which the prospect of approaching disturbances always brings forth; the reckless, the ardent, the desperate; men who laboured under the subsisting state of society, and hoped that any change would ameliorate their condition. A proportion of the nobles also adhered to their principles, at the head of whom was the Duke of Orleans, who brought a princely fortune, a selfish heart, and depraved habits, to forward the work of corruption, but wanted steadiness to rule the faction which his prodigality had created, and the Marquis La Fayette, who had nursed a republican spirit amidst American dangers, and brought to the strife of freedom in the Old World the ardent desires which had been awakened by its triumph in the New. The Counts Clermont Tonnerre and Lally Tollendal also were attached to the same principles; the Duke de la Rochefoucault, and the Duke de Liancourt, the Marquis de Crillon, and the Viscount Montmorency, names long celebrated in the annals of French glory, and some of which were destined to acquire a fatal celebrity from the misfortunes of those who bore them.[1] A portentous union of rank, talent, and energy! of much which the aristocracy could produce that was generous, with all that the commons could furnish that was eminent; of philosophic enthusiasm with plebeian audacity; of the vigour of rising ability with the weight of antiquated splendour.

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[1] Lac. vii. 13, 15. Dumont, 38. Th. i. 41.

Two circumstances, however, were remarkable in the composition of the Constituent Assembly, and contributed in a great degree to influence its future proceedings.

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Absence of philosophers and literary men.

The first was the almost total exclusion of literary and philosophical talent, and the extraordinary preponderance of the legal profession. With the exception of Bailly, and one or two other illustrious individuals, no name of celebrity was to be found among its members. On the other hand, no less than 279 of the Tiers Etat were advocates, chiefly from the provincial courts of France.[1] This class did not correspond to the barristers of England, who, although not in general men of property, are at least possessed of talent and information, but were provincial advocates, stewards of petty local jurisdictions, country attorneys, notaries, and the whole train of the ministers of municipal litigation, the fomenters of petty war and village vexation. "From the moment," says Mr Burke, "that I read the list of their names, and saw this, I foresaw distinctly, and very nearly as it happened, all that was to follow!"[2] This fact is not surprising, when it is considered, on the one hand, how few of the electors were capable of appreciating the merits of scientific characters, in a country where not one in fifty could read;[3] and, on the other, how closely the necessities of men brought them every where in contact with that enterprising and restless body which lived upon their divisions. The absence of the philosophers is not much to be regretted, as, with a few splendid exceptions, they seldom make good practical statesmen; but the multitude of lawyers turned out an evil of the first magnitude, possessing, as they did, talent without property, and the desire of distinction without the principles which should regulate it. The worst characters in the Revolution—Robespierre, Danton, and almost all their associates—sprung from that class.

[1] Lac. vii. 15. v. 93

[2] Burke, Fr. Rev. Works, vi. 117.

[3] Young's Travels, i. 384.

The second was the great proportion of the Tiers

Etat, who were men of no property or consideration in the country, mere needy adventurers, who pushed themselves into the Estates in order to make their fortune amidst the public convulsions which were anticipated. The leading men of the banking and commercial interest were indeed members of this body, and took a pride in being considered its head; but their numbers were inconsiderable, compared with those of their needy brethren, and their talents not sufficient to enable them to maintain an ascendency. When the contest began, they were speedily supplanted by the clamorous and reckless adventurers who aimed at nothing but public confusion. France, on this occasion, paid the penalty of her unjust and invidious feudal distinctions; the class was awanting, so well known in England, which, nominally belonging to the Commons, is bound to the Peers by similarity of situation and community of interest; which forms the link between the aristocracy and the people, and moderates the pride of the former by their firmness, and the turbulence of the latter by their authority.[1] *

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Few great proprietors.

[1] Lac. vii. 20.

* The Constituent Assembly was composed of 1128 persons, of whom about two-thirds were non-proprietors. They were arranged in the following manner:—

Clergy.		Nobles.	
Archbishops and Bishops,	48	Prince of the Blood,	1
Abbots and Canons,	35	Magistrates,	28
Curates,	210	Gentilhommes,	241
	293		270

Tiers Etat.	
Ecclesiastics,	2
Gentilhommes,	12
Mayors,	18
Magistrates,	62
Lawyers,	279
Physicians,	16
Merchants, Farmers, &c.	176
	565

Nobles and Clergy, 563.—Tiers Etat,

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Efforts to sway the Assembly.

The aristocratic party, perceiving with dismay that the Tiers Etat composed a half of the whole deputies of France, spared no effort to secure the support of the nobles and the clergy. Every thing, it was evident, would depend on their fidelity; a committee of the leaders was held at the hotel of the Countess of Polignac, the head of an ill-fated though generous and devoted family, from whom the royal cause suffered as much in the commencement as in the close of the Revolution. The plan arranged by them was to prevent every thing by conceding nothing; to control Paris by means of the army, the Tiers Etat by the influence of the nobility, and the clergy by the hopes of preferment. Every thing was regulated by the precedent of the last meeting of the States-General; they forgot that nearly two centuries had since intervened, and that 1789 was not 1614.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 36, 37.

After the Assembly was united, and the parties were divided, they stood thus:—

Côté Droit, Royalists.		Côté Gauche, Democrats.	
Archbishops and Bishops,	39	Prince of the Blood,	1
Abbots and Canons,	25	Lawyers,	160
Curates,	10	Curates,	80
Nobles,	180	Gentilhommes,	55
Magistrates,	10	Merchants, Farmers, &c.	30
Lawyers,	18		326
Farmers,	40		
	322		

Centre or undecided.

Clergy,	140
Nobles,	20
Magistrates,	9
Lawyers,	101
Tiers Etat,	210
	480

Thus, the Côté Gauche, which ultimately obtained the complete command of the Assembly and France, was at first less than *a third* of its number.

Towards the maintenance of this system, or indeed the establishment of any thing like regulated freedom, it was indispensable that the different orders should meet apart from each other, and that each should have a negative upon the measures proposed by the other; because the great numbers of the commons, who were all united, gave them a decided preponderance in voting over the other orders, a considerable portion of whom, especially the clergy, were already disposed to join the popular cause. The plan of M. Neckar, accordingly, was to form the States into two Chambers, the one composed of the nobles and clergy, the other of the Tiers Etat,—similar to the House of Lords and Commons in England.[1] Had this plan been steadily adhered to, or been practicable in the excited state of the country, what a multitude of calamities would have been spared to France and to Europe!

[1] Mig. i. 35.

On the day following the opening of the States-General, the Noblesse and the Clergy constituted themselves in their respective chambers, while the Commons, to whom, on account of their numbers, the general hall of meeting had been assigned, met, and there waited, or pretended to wait, for the other orders. The contest was now openly engaged; the deputies of the Commons alleged that they could not verify their powers till they were joined by the whole Estates, while the Clergy and Nobles had already verified theirs in their chambers apart, and were ready to begin business. For several weeks they daily met in the great hall, and vainly waited for the accession of the other orders. They attempted nothing, but simply trusted to the force of inactivity to compel the submission of their opponents.[2]

Tiers Etat insist for one Assembly, May 6, 1789.

[2] Lac. vii. 29. Mig. i. 37. Th. i. 45, 46, 49.

It was soon evident that this state of things could

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not long continue. The refusal of the Commons to constitute themselves, formed a complete stoppage to every sort of business, while the urgent state of the finances, and the rapidly increasing anarchy of the kingdom, loudly called for immediate measures. Mean while the firmness of the Third Estate occasioned the utmost agitation in Paris, and crowds of all classes daily came to Versailles to encourage the members in their courageous resistance to the measures of the court.[1]

Completely stops the public business.

[1] Th. i. 50, 53.

In this contest the advantage evidently lay on the side of the Commons. The state of the finances rendered it absolutely necessary that the States-General should commence their labours; their dissolution therefore was not to be apprehended. On the other hand, by simply remaining in a state of inactivity, they did nothing which could apparently justify harsh measures, and there was every reason to believe that they would ultimately weary out their antagonists. The force of public opinion, always at first, in civil commotions, on the side of resistance, was daily strengthening their cause. The agitation of the capital was intimidating their adversaries, and the divisions which prevailed among them rendered it every hour more improbable that they would be able to maintain their ground. The Commons were unanimous, while a considerable portion of the Nobility, and the greater part of the Clergy, secretly inclined to their side.[2]

Violent contest betwixt the parties.

[2] Mig. i. 37. Lac. vii. 30. Th. i. 52, 53.

During the discussion on this important subject, the clergy, who wished to bring about a re-union of the orders without openly yielding to the Commons, sent a deputation, headed by the Archbishop of Aix, to make a pathetic appeal to them on the miseries of the country people; and he concluded by making a proposal that some deputies of the Commons should

join a conference with a few of the Clergy and Nobles, on the best means of assuaging their sufferings. The Commons, who did not wish to yield any thing, and yet knew not how to decline such a proposal, without compromising themselves with the people, were at a loss what answer to return, when a young man, unknown to the Assembly, rose and said, "Go and tell your colleagues, that if they are so impatient to assuage the sufferings of the poor, let them come to this hall to unite themselves with their friends; tell them no longer to retard our operations by affected delays tell them it is vain to employ stratagems like this to induce us to alter our firm resolutions. Rather let them, as worthy imitators of their Master, renounce a luxury which consumes the funds of indigence; dismiss those insolent lackeys who attend them; sell their superb equipages, and convert these vile superfluities into aliment for the poor." At this speech, which so clearly expressed the passions of the moment, a confused murmur of applause ran through the assembly,—every one asked who was the young deputy who had so happily given vent to the public feeling. His name afterwards made every man in France tremble,—it was MAXIMILIEN ROBESPIERRE.[1]

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[1] Dumont, 61. Th. i. 48, 49.

At this critical period, the measures of the court were not conducted with the firmness which the circumstances required. Neckar had not resolution enough to carry through the only plan which promised security, that of uniting the Clergy and Nobles in one Chamber, and the Commons in another. He did not venture to propose it to the Tiers Etat, because it would have endangered his popularity, nor to press it on the King, because it had little chance of success. The crown was not yet sufficiently humbled to de-

Vacillation of the court.

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scend to the restrictions of a limited monarchy. Thus, by wishing to avoid breaking with either party, he lost the confidence of both, and pursued the system of temporization, of all others, in civil convulsions, the most ruinous.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 31, 32. Mig. 31, 58.

It is not the least remarkable of the circumstances of that eventful period, that the higher classes of the noblesse were nearly unanimous in resisting their combination with the clergy into a separate Chamber. They were all averse to any union with so mixed a body as the clergy had now become, comprising not less than an hundred curés of plebeian extraction; and those bearing historic names were still more unwilling to become blended with the new nobility, whom they regarded as little better than titled roturiers. The excessive jealousy which the old nobility entertained both for the rural or *campagnard* noblesse, and those who had recently acquired titles, was one of the great causes which prevented any effectual resistance being opposed to the Revolution. Thus, by a strange fatality, the result of inexperienced pride, the two orders in the state, whose existence was at stake on such an union, were most averse to form it. The formation of two separate Chambers was rendered impossible, because no one, not even those whose existence depended on promoting the junction, supported it.[2]

[2] Mad. de Staël, i. 196. Th. i. 145. Burke, v. 253.

Mean while, the pretensions of the Commons hourly increased with the indecision of their adversaries. It was no longer a question whether they should, of their own authority, constitute themselves the representatives of the nation; the only doubt was, what title they should assume. The moderate party proposed that they should be called the *Commons* of France, indicating by that expression their bias towards the

English constitution. The Abbé Siêyes * supported the wishes of the democrats, by contrasting the number of their constituents with those of the privileged orders. "The Chamber of Nobles," said he, "represents 150,000 individuals, and we 25,000,000. If we yield, it is subjecting twenty-five millions to the yoke of a few thousands of the privileged orders." The contest, which lasted till past midnight, was conducted with the utmost vehemence; the cries of the opposite parties drowned the voice of the speakers; the wind blew with terrific violence, and rattled the windows, as if the edifice in which they were sitting was about to fall. But Bailly, the president, remained immovable, and the minority, wearied with a fruitless opposition, retired at one in the morning, leaving the assembly in the hands of the popular party. It was then resolved by a majority of 491 to 90, to assume the title of NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, and intimation was sent to the other orders that they would proceed to constitute themselves, with or without their adherence, which they immediately afterwards did, by that dignified appellation. By the assumption of this title, the Tiers Etat openly evinced their determination to erect themselves into a sovereign power, and, like the Long Parliament of Charles I., disregard alike the throne and the nobility.[1]

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The Tiers Etat take the name of National Assembly, 17th June, 1789.

[1] Mig. i. 39. Lac. vii. 32, 35. Th. i. 56, 57. 17th June, 1789.

* Dumont mentions a singular instance of the absurd and perilous vanity with which the leaders of the Assembly regarded their political acquirements. When walking with Talleyrand and Siêyes, the latter growing communicative as to his labours, at last said, "Politics is a science which I think *I have brought to perfection.*" Had he possessed, he justly observes, the least idea of the slow progress and excessive intricacy of that most difficult science, he would never have held such language. Presumption in that branch, as in every other, is the result of ignorance.[2]

[2] Dumont, 64.

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The aristocratical party were thunderstruck by this measure, but they possessed neither abilities, firmness, nor union sufficient to counteract its influence. The Marquis de Montesquieu proposed the only rational course, which was, that to counterbalance this stretch of power by the commons, the nobles and clergy should address the King to constitute them into an Upper Chamber, but they wanted resolution enough to adopt it. The Duke of Luxembourg, the Cardinal Rochefoucault, and the Archbishop of Paris, besought the King to adopt vigorous measures, and support their orders against the usurpation of the Commons, but in vain. The nobility were divided, the court vacillating. Decision belonged alone to the Commons, and they, in consequence, speedily obtained the whole power of the state.[1]

Dismay of the nobles.

[1] Mig. i. 39. Th. i. 60. Lac. vii. 39.

The next step of the Tiers Etat was to declare all imposts illegal, except those voted by themselves, or during the period when they were sitting. At the same time, the fears of the capitalists were tranquillized, by consolidating the public debt, and the alarm of the people allayed, by the appointment of a committee to watch over the public subsistence.[2]

[2] Mig. i. 39. Riv. 17. Th. i. 59.

No language can describe the enthusiasm which these decisive measures excited throughout all France. Tears of joy were shed when the intelligence was received in the provinces. "A single day," it was said, "has destroyed eight hundred years of prejudice and slavery. The nation has recovered its rights, and reason resumed its sway." But the more thoughtful trembled at the consequences of such gigantic steps: "Not only," said they, "are the noblesse and the clergy set aside, usage disregarded, rights abolished, but the authority of the throne itself

Enthusiasm over the country on this event.

is undermined. In England, a balance is preserved between the three estates; but here the National Assembly has swallowed up every thing." [1] CHAP. III. 1789.

[1] Riv. 18.

To meet these increasing dangers, M. Neckar was preparing the plan of a constitution calculated to satisfy all classes, and tranquillize the public mind. His measures would have formed a government very similar to the limited monarchy in England; and such as, engrafted on feudal institutions, offered the fairest prospect of stability. He proposed that the whole representation of the nation should vote together in matters of taxation, but by orders in questions of individual rights or privileges; and that hereafter the States-General should meet in separate chambers. But the nobles had now gained an ascendency over the mind of the King, and more violent measures than he approved were resolved on by the court. It was determined to close the hall of the Tiers Etat until the 23d June, when the King, in person, was to announce his intentions to the assembled Estates. The object of this measure was to prevent the Tiers Etat from acquiring an accession of influence, by the junction of a large body of the clergy, and a considerable portion of the nobility, who were known to be wavering; but its consequences were, to the last degree, fatal to the interests of France.[2]

Neckar proposes a mixed constitution.

[2] Mig. i. 40, 41. Lac. vii. 37, 38. De Staël, Fr. Riv. i. 37. Th. i. 61, 62.

On the 20th June, the heralds-at-arms, in Versailles, proclaimed that the King would meet the Estates on the 23d, and on the same day the doors of the hall of the States-General were closed by grenadiers of the guard to the deputies of the Commons. This step was certainly unfortunate; it announced hostile intentions, without explaining them, and irritated the deputies, without subduing them. Bailly, the pre-

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sident of the Assembly, went in form to the doors, and finding them closed by orders of the King, he protested against the despotic violence of the crown, and instantly repaired, with the assembled deputies, attended by an immense crowd of spectators, to an adjoining Tennis Court, where the following oath was immediately tendered to the deputies, and first taken by Bailly himself.—"The National Assembly, considering that they have been convoked to fix the constitution of the kingdom, to regenerate the public order, and fix the true principles of the monarchy; that nothing can prevent them from continuing their deliberations, and completing the important work committed to their charge; and that, wherever their members are assembled, there is the National Assembly of France, decree, that all the members now assembled shall instantly take an oath never to separate; and, if dispersed, to reassemble wherever they can, until the constitution of the kingdom, and the regeneration of the public order, are established on a solid basis; and that this oath, taken by all and each singly, shall be confirmed by the signature of every member, in token of their unshakeable resolution."[1]

Tennis Court oath. June 20, 1789.

[1] Lac. vii. 39, 41. Th. 63, 64. Riv. 19. Mig. i. 41.

The court on this occasion committed a capital error, in not making the royalist or constitutional party in the Assembly acquainted with their intentions, and preventing that unanimity which necessarily arose from the appearance of measures of coercion, without any knowledge of their object. The consequence was, that the most moderate members, apprehensive of the crown, and alarmed at the apparatus of military force directed against the Assembly, joined the violent democrats, and the oath was taken, with the exception of one courageous deputy, unanimously. This decisive step committed the *whole*

Assembly in a contest with the government; the minds of the deputies were exasperated by the apprehended violence, and the oath formed a secret bond of association among numbers, who but for it would have been violently opposed to each other. Mirabeau, in particular, whose leaning from the beginning was as much towards the aristocracy as was consistent with a popular leader, openly expressed, at a subsequent period, his dissatisfaction at not having been made acquainted with the real designs of the King. "Was there no one," said he, "in the Assembly, whom they could make acquainted with their designs? It is thus that kings are led to the scaffold!"[1]

[1] Riv. 19. Mig. i. 41. Lac. vii. 39. Dumont, 89, 97.

This step was followed on the 22d by an important accession of strength. On that day the Assembly met in the church of St Louis, as the Tennis Court had been closed by order of the princes to whom it belonged, and they were here joined by 148 of the clergy, who participated in their feelings, and were resolved to share their dangers. This great reinforcement was headed by the Archbishop of Vienne, the Archbishop of Bordeaux, and the Bishop of Chartres. They were received with transports of joy and tears of gratitude by the Commons, who thus acquired a decided proponderance. By this junction, their majority over the other orders became so great, that the victory of the Commons, if they continued in one Assembly, was rendered apparent. The spectacle of the union of the clergy with their brethren of the Commons, excited the most lively transports, and they embraced each other amidst tears of joy.[2] Who could then have foreseen, that in a few weeks the whole ecclesiastical body were to be reduced to beggary by those who now received them as deliverers, and that a clergyman could not appear in

148 of the clergy join Tiers Etat.

[2] Dumont, 90, 91. Mig. i. 42. Bailly, i. 203. Riv. 20. Th. i. 74.

CHAP. III. 1789. the streets without being exposed to the grossest insults! Such is the fate of those who think, by concessions dictated by fear, to arrest the march of a revolution.

It is impossible to refuse a tribute of admiration to those intrepid men, who, transported by a zeal for liberty and the love of their country, ventured to take a step fraught with so many dangers, and which, to all appearance, might have brought many to prison or the scaffold. Few situations can be imagined more dignified than that of Bailly, crowning a life of scientific labour with patriotic exertion, surrounded by an admiring Assembly, the idol of the people, the admiration of Europe. But how vain are the hopes of permanent elevation, founded on the applause of the multitude! Could the eye of prophecy then have unveiled the future, it would have discovered this idol of the people shivering on his face on the Champs de Mars, with his arms tied behind his back, and the guillotine suspended over his head, condemned by the Assembly, execrated by the multitude, subjected to a cruel and prolonged punishment to gratify the peculiar hatred and savage vengeance of the populace, whom he now incurred these dangers to support!

The majority of the noblesse, upon hearing of this decisive act on the part of the Commons, which amounted, in effect, to a seizure of the whole powers of government, named a deputation to lay their complaints at the foot of the throne. A minority of forty-seven dissented from this resolution, and shortly after openly espoused the cause of the Commons. In this number were to be found the greatest families and ablest men in the French nobility; the Duke of Orleans, the Duke of Rochefoucault, the Duke of Liancourt, Count Lally Tollendal, Clermont Tonnerre, the two brothers

Lameth, and the Marquis La Fayette. They were almost all guillotined, exiled, or ruined, during the progress of the Revolution; a memorable example of the inability of the higher ranks ultimately to coerce a movement which they themselves put in motion, and of the futility of the idea, that no innovations are dangerous if they are headed by the greatest proprietors in the state."[1] CHAP. III. 1789.

[1] Th. i. 65.

At length the famous sitting of the 23d June took place. The King took his seat on the throne, surrounded by his guards, and attended by the pomp of the monarchy: he was received in sullen silence. His discourse commenced by condemning the conduct of the Commons, and lamenting the spirit of faction which had already made such progress among the representatives of the people, and was alike contrary to the interests of the nation, and the warmest wishes of his heart. The declarations of the monarch were then read. The first prescribed the form of the meetings of the Estates, and enacted their assemblage by three orders, as essentially linked with the constitution of the state: it regulated the form of their deliberations; annulled the declarations of the 17th June by the Tiers Etat, as contrary to law; reserved to the crown the right of regulating the future meetings of the States-General, and closed their deliberations against the public. The second embraced an exposition of the rights which the monarch conceded to his people, and they contained the whole elements of rational freedom; in particular, he abolished the pecuniary privileges and exemption from taxation of the nobles and clergy; put an end to the taille and the impost of Franc fief; regulated the expenses of the royal household; provided for the consolidation of the public debt; secured the liberty of the press;

Royal sitting of 23d June.

Great concessions of the King.

CHAP. III. 1789. established the security of property and of titles of honour; regulated the criminal code, the personal freedom of the subject, and provided for the maintenance of the public roads, the equality of contributions, and the establishment of Provincial Assemblies. With truth could the monarch exclaim, "I may say, without fear of self-deception, that never King did so much for his subjects as I have done for mine; but what other could so well deserve it as the people of France?"[1]

[1] Riv. 23, 24. Th. i. 67, 68. Lac. vii. 43.

Give no satisfaction.

These important concessions, which, if supported by proper vigour in the government, might have stopped the Revolution, had no effect in allaying the public discontents. The period was passed when the language of moderation could be heard; the passions were roused, the populace excited; and when does passion yield to reason, or the multitude pause upon the acquisition of power? The concluding words of the King had the air without the reality of vigour; they took from the grace of the gift without adding to the authority of the giver. He menaced the deputies with his vengeance if they resisted; threatened to dissolve them; to carry on the work of reformation by his own authority; and concluded by commanding them to dissolve, and meet on the following day in their separate chambers. The clergy and the nobles obeyed; the Commons remained alone in the hall.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 43. Lac. vii. 45.

The Commons refuse to leave the hall.

The master of the ceremonies upon this entered the room, and reminded the members of the intentions of the King. Mirabeau replied,—"Gentlemen, I admit the concessions made by the King would be sufficient for the public good, if the presents of despotism were not always dangerous. What is the insolent dictatorship to which you are subjected? Is

this display of arms, this violation of the national sanctuary, the fitting accompaniment of a boon to the people? Who prescribes these rules? Your mandatory;—he who should receive your commands, instead of giving them to you. The liberty of deliberation is destroyed; a military force surrounds the Assembly. I propose that, proceeding with becoming dignity, you act up to the spirit of your oath, and refuse to separate till you have completed the constitution." Then, turning to the master of the ceremonies, he continued, "Tell your master, that we are here by the order of the people, and that we will not be expelled but at the point of the bayonet."—"You are to-day," said Siêyes, calmly, "what you were yesterday; let us proceed with our deliberations." On the motion of Camus, they ratified all their proceedings, and declared the persons of the members inviolable.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 45. Mig. i. 4. Th. i. 68, 69.

Considered in themselves, these concessions were the greatest ever made by a king to his subjects, and at any other time they would have excited transports of gratitude. But the passions were roused; democratic ambition was thoroughly awakened, and this conciliatory conduct was only adding fuel to the flame. If a government is powerful, whatever it gives is hailed with gratitude as a gift; if it is weak, its concessions are considered as the discharge of a debt, and tend only to rouse the popular party to fresh demands. The Assembly had resolved to become the National Assembly, and to rule France with a despotic authority; any thing less than this seemed unworthy of acceptance. For the King to have made a show of resistance, and done nothing to force it,—announced an intention to uphold the throne, and ended by yielding,—was literally an act of madness, which necessarily led to the ruin of the monarchy.[2]

[2] Dumont, 87.

CHAP. III. 1789. Royal authority overthrown. [1] Mig. i. 44. Th. i. 74.

On that day the royal authority was annihilated in France. The Assembly had openly bid defiance to the mandates of the throne; and public opinion supported them in the attempt. The initiative of laws, the moral influence arising from the idea of supremacy, had passed from the crown to the people.[1]

M. Neckar was not present at this memorable meeting; the evening before he had tendered his resignation, which was not accepted, as the measures adopted by the court were not such as he thoroughly approved. He was discovered in Versailles by the crowd, and conducted home amidst the loudest acclamations. By his conduct he had evinced the sincerity of his intentions, and his disapproval of the measures of the crown; and he was, for a brief space, thenceforward considered as the leader of the popular party.[2]

[2] Lac. vii. 47. Mig. i. 44. Th. i. 70.

June 24, 1789. Duke of Orleans and part of the nobility join Tiers Etat. [3] Lac. vi. 50. Mig. i. 44. Th. i. 71.

On the following day, the Duke of Orleans and forty-six members of the nobility joined the Tiers Etat. They were received with transport; but the duke experienced so much emotion at leaving the chamber of the hereditary legislation, that he fainted in rising from his seat. He was offered the chair of president, which he had the prudence to refuse; his object was the throne; but fate destined him for the scaffold, and the revolutionary sceptre for his less guilty descendants.[3]

King yields, and enjoins majority of nobles to do the same. June 25.

The King, perceiving opposition fruitless, intimated his wish that the remainder of the clergy and the nobility should join the Tiers Etat. The nobles made an energetic remonstrance against this measure, and foretold the fatal effects which would follow their being immersed in a body where their numbers were so inconsiderable, compared to those of their opponents. "Your Majesty," said the Duke of Luxem-

bourg, president, "has every thing to fear from a single Assembly, which has already evinced its violence by a rash and illegal oath. If that Assembly beholds us arrive within its walls, what advantage will it not derive from so signal a victory? what can we expect from a body which has so often sworn our ruin? Our presence will increase its consideration, without diminishing its ambition. Apart from the Tiers Etat, we form at least a barrier against its fury; our position is doubtless full of dangers, but we will cheerfully face them in defence of the throne."—"No," exclaimed the King with emotion, "I cannot allow my faithful nobles to engage in so unequal a struggle. It is alike my wish and my duty to save them from such manifest perils. My mind is made up; *I will not suffer a single person to perish on my account.* Tell the nobles that I entreat them to unite with the other orders; if that is not sufficient, as their sovereign I command them." The order was obeyed; the nobles and clergy joined the Tiers Etat, where they were speedily lost in an overwhelming majority. The humanity of the King overturned the throne.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 56. Th. i. 73. Riv. 33. June 27.

These events increased to an unparalleled degree the excitation of the public mind in Paris. The young, the ardent, the visionary, believed a second age of gold was arriving; that the regeneration of the social body would purify all its sins, extirpate all its sufferings. The Palais Royal, recently constructed at an immense expense by the Duke of Orleans, was the centre of the agitation; in its splendid gardens the groups of the disaffected were assembled, under its gorgeous galleries the democratical coffee-houses were to be found.[2] It was amidst the din of gambling, and the glitter of prostitution, that Liberty

Immense effervescence in Paris.

[2] Lac. vii. 58. Riv. 43.

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was nurtured in France; it must be owned it could not have had a cradle more impure.

Posterity will find it difficult to credit the fermentation which then prevailed in the capital. The enlightened, from a principle of patriotism; the capitalists, from anxiety about their fortunes; the people, from the pressure of their necessities, which they expected immediately to find relieved; the shopkeepers, from ambition; the young, from enthusiasm; the old, from apprehension; all were actuated by the most violent emotions. Business was at a stand. Instead of pursuing their usual avocations, multitudes of all ranks filled the streets, anxiously discussing the public events, and crowding round every one who had last arrived from Versailles. In one depraved class the fever of revolution was peculiarly powerful. The numerous body of courtezans unanimously supported the popular cause, and by the seduction of their charms contributed not a little to the defection of the military, which shortly afterwards took place.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 47. Lac. vii. 60, 61. Th. i. 81.

Revolt and treason of the French Guards, July 1.

The regiment of the French Guards, consisting of 3600 men, in the highest state of discipline and equipment, had for some time given alarming symptoms of disaffection. Their colonel had ordered them, in consequence, to be confined to their barracks, when 300 of them broke out of their bounds, and repaired instantly to the Palais Royal. They were received with enthusiasm, and liberally plied with money by the Orleans party; and to such a height did the transports rise, that, how incredible soever it may appear, it is proved by the testimony of numerous witnesses above all suspicion, women of family and distinction openly embraced the soldiers as they walked in the gardens with their mistresses. After these disorders had continued for some time, eleven of the ringlead-

ers in the mutiny were seized and thrown into the prison of the Abbey; a mob of 6000 men immediately assembled, forced the gates of the prison, and brought them back in triumph to the Palais Royal. The King, upon the petition of the Assembly, pardoned the prisoners, and on the following day they were walking in triumph through the streets of Paris.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 60, 63. Mig. i. 47. Th. i. 82, 83.

Vigorous measures are resolved on by the Court.

These alarming events rendered it evident that some decisive step had become indispensable to prop up the declining authority of the throne. The noblesse recovered from their stupor; even the King became convinced that vigorous measures were called for to arrest the progress of the Revolution. For some time after their union with the Commons, the Nobles still met at a different house, and were preparing a protest against the ambition of the National Assembly, which subsequent events rendered nugatory; but the daily diminution of their numbers proved how hopeless in public estimation their cause had become. In this extremity the King, as a last resource, threw himself upon the army. The old Marshal de Broglio was appointed general of the royal army; and all the troops on whom most reliance could be placed, were collected in the neighbourhood of Versailles. "Marshal," said the King, when he first received him, "you are come to assist a king without money, without forces; for I cannot disguise from you that the spirit of revolt has made great progress in my armies. My last hope is in your honour and fidelity. You will fulfil the dearest wishes of my heart, if you can succeed, without violence or effusion of blood, in frustrating the designs of those who menace the throne, and which would, erelong, bring misery on my people."[2] The marshal, ignorant of the changes of the times, answered for the safety of

[2] Lac. vii. 64. Mig. i. 47. Th. i. 85.

CHAP. III. 1789. the capital, and immediately established a numerous staff, whose insolence and consequential airs only contributed to increase the public discontents.

They are disapproved of by Neckar.

Neckar openly disapproved of the assemblage of the troops, and Mirabeau prepared an address by the Assembly to the King, praying for their removal. "The danger, Sire," said he; "is pressing, is universal; for the provinces, who, once alarmed for their liberties, may not know how to restrain their violence; for the capital, which, pressed by want and the most cruel apprehensions, will become exasperated by the presence of the soldiers; for the troops themselves, who, brought in contact with the centre of discontent, may share its influence, and forget an engagement which has made them soldiers, to recollect that Nature has made them men. All great revolutions have broke forth from trifling causes; more than once the world has been convulsed from an event much less sinister than the present."—The utmost alarm prevailed in Versailles, and the members of the Assembly beheld with dismay the long trains of artillery and cavalry which incessantly traversed the streets.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 67, 68. Mig. i. 47. Th. i. 86.

Military preparations. Change of Ministry.

The court now openly adopted hostile measures; the saloons of the palace were instantly filled with generals, colonels, aides-de-camp, and young members of the nobility, whose inexperience and rashness filled the Queen and her supporters with unreasonable confidence in their own strength. The Ministry was completely changed, and M. Neckar received not only his dismissal, but an order to quit the kingdom. This formal command was accompanied by a note from the King, in which he intimated that he could not prevent his removal, and prayed him to depart in private, for fear of exciting public disturbances.[2] M. Neckar received this intimation just as he was dress-

July 11.

[2] Lac. vii. 69, 70. Mig. i. 47, 48. Th. i. 88.

ing for dinner: he dined quietly without divulging it to any one, and set out in the evening with Madame Neckar for Brussels. CHAP. III. 1789.

Paris was thrown into the utmost consternation by this intelligence. Fury immediately succeeded to alarm; the theatres were closed; the Palais Royal resounded with the cry "To arms;" and a leader of future distinction, Camille Desmoulins, armed with pistols, gave the signal for insurrection by breaking a branch off a tree in the gardens, which he placed in his hat. The whole foliage was instantly stripped off the trees, and the crowds decorated themselves with the symbols of revolt. "Citizens," said Camille Desmoulins, "the moment for action is arrived; the dismissal of M. Neckar is the signal for a St Bartholomew of the patriots; this very evening the Swiss and German battalions will issue from the Champs de Mars to massacre us; one resource alone is left, which is to fly to arms."—The crowd unanimously adopted his proposal, and, decorated with green boughs, marched through the streets, bearing in triumph the busts of M. Neckar and the Duke of Orleans. They were charged by the regiment of Royal Allemand, which was put to flight by showers of stones; but the dragoons of Prince Lambesc having come up, the mob were broken, and dispersed through the gardens of the Tuileries. In the tumult, the bearer of one of the busts, and a soldier of the French Guards, were killed; theirs was the first blood shed in the Revolution.[1] Consternation in Paris on this event.

[1] Lac. vii. 70. Th. i. 89. Mig. i. 48.

From the lead which he took on this occasion, Camille Desmoulins acquired the name of the "First Apostle of Liberty." Associated with Danton, he long enjoyed the gales of popular favour. He died Camille Desmoulins.

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on the scaffold, the victim of the very faction he had so great a share in creating.

Combats in Paris. Treachery of the army.

The Prince of Lambesc had placed a squadron of dragoons in front of the barracks of the French Guards, to intimidate that disaffected regiment. When intelligence of the rout in the gardens in the Tuileries arrived, the troops broke down the iron rails in front of their barracks, and opened a volley upon the horse, which obliged them to retire; they pursued them to the gardens of the Tuileries, and posted themselves in order of battle in front of the populace, and between them and the royal troops. The soldiers in the Champs de Mars received orders to advance and dislodge them; they were received by a discharge of musketry, and could not be prevailed on to return the fire. The regiment of Little Swiss was the first to give the example of defection. The monarchy was lost; the household troops had revolted; and the remainder of the army refused to act against the people.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 50. Toul. i. 73. Lac. vii. 74.

Troops withdrawn to Versailles.

In this extremity, the measures of the court were neither calculated to conciliate nor overawe. The soldiers were withdrawn from Paris, and collected round Versailles. A regiment was encamped in the splendid orangery of the palace, while the governor of the Bastile in vain demanded troops and ammunition: it seemed as if the Government was intent only on intimidating the Assembly, while the gulf of popular insurrection was yawning beneath their feet. They were deceived by the reports of the authorities, who persisted in representing the tumults as only temporary, and guaranteed the safety of the capital. But fatal events soon convinced them of their error.[2]

[2] Toul. i. 74. Lac. vii. 78, 79.

During the absence of the military, the tumults of Paris arose to an unexampled height. Immense bodies of workmen assembled together, and gave vent to the most inflammatory language; aided by the guards, who now openly joined the populace, they broke open the arsenals and gunsmiths' shops, distributed the arms among their adherents, burnt several houses, and opened the barriers, which had been closed by orders of the King. The hôtel des Invalides was taken, with the aid of the veterans who inhabited it, within sight of the Ecole Militaire, where the troops of the line were stationed; 20,000 muskets and 20 pieces of cannon were seized, and distributed among the insurgents. The place de Grève was converted into a vast depôt of arms, ammunition, and artillery; at the hôtel de Ville a committee was appointed, which rapidly organized an insurrectionary force; 50,000 pikes were immediately forged, and distributed among the people; and it was determined that the armed force should be raised to forty-eight thousand men. This was the commencement of the National Guard of Paris, a body which was of such essential service, sometimes for good sometimes for evil, during the progress of the Revolution. In decision of conduct and rapidity of organization the French are superior to any nation recorded in history.[1]

Dreadful tumults in Paris.

Origin of the National Guard.

[1] Mig. i. 54, 57. Lac. vii. 79, 82. Toul. i. 75. Th. i. 90, 91.

Those terrible bands which always make their appearance in civil commotions, and are never seen but on such occasions, now every where showed themselves, as if they had sprung from the earth. This tumultuary array soon received some consistency from the French Guards, who were, for the most part, incorporated with it, and rendered the most important services in the conflicts which ensued.[2]

[2] Th. i. 92.

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On the morning of the 14th, intelligence was spread that the troops stationed at St Denis were marching on the capital, and that the cannon of the Bastile were pointed down the street St Antoine. The cry immediately arose, "To the Bastile;" and the wave of the insurrection began to roll in that direction. The name of that detested fortress, in which the victims of court tyranny had so often been immured, excited the indignation of the populace to the highest pitch, and a formidable insurrectionary force soon surrounded its walls. Eighty invalids and thirty of the Swiss Guard constituted its garrison; the artillery was well provided, but the place almost destitute of food for the soldiers. The guns, however, were loaded with grape-shot, the drawbridge raised, and the sentinels posted as during a period of siege. A body of the insurgents was admitted within the first drawbridge to parley with the garrison; transported by ardour, they began, during the conference, to escalade the inner walls, upon which the governor gave orders to fire. Fearful of the effect of grape-shot upon the dense masses of the assailants, the musketry only was at first discharged; but its effect was to repel the leaders of the assault, and the mob fell back in confusion. The arrival of the French Guards with artillery, however, speedily changed the scene. These brave men sustained with intrepidity the fire of the fortress, which now discharged grape-shot, and from the houses in the vicinity made a vigorous reply with musketry, while the cannon began to batter its ancient walls. By accident or design, the chain which suspended the inner drawbridge was cut, and the bridge fell; an immense assemblage of armed men immediately filled the court, and the garrison,[1] seeing farther resistance hopeless,

Storming of the Bastile. July 14.

1 Lac. vii. 83, 85, 88. Mig. i. 60. Toul. i. 76. Th. i. 98, 99, 101.

hoisted the white flag on the donjon tower, and shortly after laid down their arms.

A bloody revenge stained the first triumph of the arms of freedom. The garrison had capitulated to the French Guards on the promise of safety, and the brave Governor Delaunay had only been prevented, by that assurance, from setting fire to the powder magazine, and blowing the fortress and its assailants into the air. But the military were unable to restrain the fury of the populace. During the assault, the daughter of one of the officers was seized by the crowd; they proposed to burn her alive, unless the place was instantly surrendered, and had actually placed her on a mattrass, and set fire to it for that purpose, when the atrocious attempt was frustrated by the generosity of one of the French Guards, who descended from the escalade, and saved their victim. All the efforts of the soldiers, who had really gained the victory, could not restrain the bloodthirsty vengeance of the people. The Governor Delaunay, and three other officers, fell, pierced by numerous wounds, in the arms of the Guard, who were striving to protect them; the mob seized their dying remains, hung them up on the lamp-posts, and, having cut off their heads and one of their hands, carried these bloody trophies aloft on the point of pikes to the central committee in the place de Grève, amidst shouts of triumph and yells of revenge.[1]

Cruelty of the people.

[1] Lac. vii. 86, 89. Mig. i. 60, 61. Th. i. 100, 101.

M. de Flesselles, provost of the merchants, was the next victim. It was alleged that a letter had been found on the Governor Delaunay which implicated him in treachery to the popular cause. He was seized, and conducted towards the Palais Royal, to undergo an examination, but shot within a few paces of the hôtel de Ville by one of the mob.[2] The

[2] Mig. i. 62. Lac. vii. 90. Th. i. 102.

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bystanders fell on his remains, and suspended them to the lamp-posts.

Enthusiasm in Paris.

The enthusiasm in Paris was raised to the highest pitch by the storming of the Bastile, and it became, like the 10th August and the 9th Thermidor, one of the great eras in the Revolution. But its most important and lasting consequence was the establishment of the National Guard of Paris; a civic force of great power and efficiency, and which, though timid and vacillating at first, became at last the great means of rescuing the country from the iron yoke of the populace. Composed of citizens of property and respectability, it generally, though not always, inclined to the side of order, and ultimately was found combating that very despotism which arose out of the insurrection it was originally formed to support.

The night which succeeded this great event was one of extraordinary anxiety and agitation in Paris. The most alarming reports were circulated; that the foreign troops were to issue out of the cellars and sewers, and massacre the inhabitants; that a second St Bartholomew was in preparation. The people barricadoed the streets, tore up the pavement, carried stones to the tops of the houses, and established guards in the principal quarters. But nothing occurred to justify the alarm, and the anxiety of a sleepless night only added to the intense feelings which agitated the populace.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 62. Lac. vii. 92, 93.

Measures of the Court.

Mean while, the designs of the court were rapidly approaching a state of maturity. Infatuated by the reports which were transmitted to them from the military commanders, surrounded by an impetuous and inconsiderate nobility, they entertained the project of restoring tranquillity to the capital by the

immediate application of military force. The cannon of the Bastile, which was distinctly heard at Versailles, was considered as a favourable omen, as it indicated the commencement of an actual engagement, and the termination of the fatal irresolution of the troops. The old officers laughed at the idea of the Bastile being taken, and persisted in representing the tumults as a passing affair. It was resolved on the 15th to dissolve the Assembly, to publish 40,000 copies of the Declaration of the 23d June, and cause the Marshal de Broglio to move with an overwhelming force upon the capital. Still, the insurmountable aversion of the King to the effusion of blood controlled all the measures of the army; and there seems no doubt that he never would have permitted them to fire, but in resisting the aggression of the insurgents.[1]

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[1] Mig. i. 63. Th. i. 96, 97. Toul. i. 76, 77. Lac. vii. 94, 97, 98.

But, in the night, intelligence of the real state of affairs was received; that the Bastile was taken; Paris in insurrection; the Guards in open revolt; the regiments of the line in sullen inactivity. The Assembly, which had constantly sat for the two preceding days, was violently agitated by the intelligence. It was proposed to send a new deputation to the King, to urge the removal of the troops. "No," said Clermont Tonnerre, "let us leave them this night to take counsel: it is well that Kings, like private men, should learn by experience." The Duke de Liancourt took upon himself the painful duty of acquainting the King with the events which had occurred, and proceeded to his chamber in the middle of the night for that purpose. "This is a revolt," said the King, after a long silence. "Sire," replied he, "it is a revolution."[2] *

King wakened in the night.

[2] Toul. i. 78. Mig. i. 66. Th. i. 103.

* During these events, the Assembly was in the most violent state of

CHAP. III. 1789. Finding resistance hopeless, from the universal defection of the troops, the King immediately resolved upon submission, a measure which relieved him of the dreadful apprehension of causing an effusion of blood. On the following morning, he repaired, without his guards or any suite, accompanied only by his two brothers, to the Assembly. He was received in profound silence. "Gentlemen," said he, "I am come to consult you on the most important affairs: the frightful disorders of the capital call for immediate attention. It is in these moments of alarm that the Chief of the nation comes, without guards, to deliberate with his faithful deputies upon the means of restoring tranquillity. I know that the most unjust reports have been for some time in circulation as to my intentions; that even your personal freedom has been represented as being in danger. I should think my character might be a sufficient guarantee against such calumnies. As my only answer, I now come alone into the midst of you; I declare myself for ever united with the nation, and, relying on the fidelity of the National Assembly,[1] I have

And yields, July 15.

[1] Toul. i. 79. Th. i. 105.

agitation. The most alarming reports arrived every half hour from Paris; the members remained in the hall of meeting in the utmost anxiety; the sound of the cannon was distinctly heard, and they applied their ears to the ground to catch the smallest reverberation. No less than five deputations, during forty-eight hours, waited on the King, who was in as great a perplexity and terror at the effusion of blood as themselves. But nothing could daunt the audacious spirit of Mirabeau. "Tell the King," said he to the last deputation which set out, "that the foreign bands by which we are surrounded have yesterday been visited and flattered by the princess and prince, and received from them both presents and caresses. Tell him, that all night in his palace, even these foreign satellites, amidst the fumes of wine, have never ceased to predict the subjugation of France, and to breathe wishes for the destruction of the Assembly. Tell him, that in his very palace the courtiers have mingled dancing with these impious songs, and that such was the prelude to the massacre of St Bartholomew."[2]

[2] Th. i. 104.

given orders to remove the troops from Versailles and Paris; and I invite you to make my dispositions known to the capital." CHAP. III. 1789.

Immense applause followed this popular declaration; the Assembly, by a spontaneous movement, rose from their seats, and reconducted the monarch to the palace. A deputation, with the joyful intelligence, was immediately despatched to Paris, and produced a temporary calm in its fervent population. Bailly was named mayor of the city, and La Fayette commander of the armed force.[1] [1] Th. i. 106. Mig. i. 67.

On the 17th the King set out from Versailles, with few guards and a slender suite, to visit the capital, upon whose affections his sole reliance was now placed. A large part of the National Assembly accompanied him on foot; the *cortège* was swelled on the road by an immense concourse of peasants, many of whom were armed with scythes and bludgeons, which gave it a grotesque and revolutionary aspect. The Queen parted with him in the most profound grief, under the impression that she would never see him more. He had received in the morning intelligence of a design to assassinate him on the road, but that made no change on his resolution. The march, obstructed by such strange attendants, lasted seven hours; during which the King was made to taste, drop by drop, the bitterest dregs of misery. He was received at the gates by Bailly, at the head of the municipality, who presented to him the keys of the city. "I bring your majesty," said he, "the same keys which were presented to Henry IV. He entered the city as a conqueror; now it is the people who have regained their sovereign." Louis advanced to the hôtel de Ville through the midst of above 100,000 armed men, under an arch formed of crossed sabres. The whole of the immense King visits Paris. July 17.

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crowd bore tri-color cockades, now assumed as the national colours. At the Pont Neuf, he passed a formidable park of artillery; but at the touch-hole and mouth of each had been placed a garland of flowers. Few cries of *Vive le Roi* met the ears of the unfortunate monarch; those of *Vive la Nation* were much more numerous; but when he appeared at the window of the hôtel de Ville, with the tricolored cockade on his breast, thunders of applause rent the air, and he was reconducted to Versailles amidst the most tumultuous expressions of public attachment.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 105, 109. Th. i. 105, 109. Toul. i. 82, 83. Burke, v. 139.

Commencement of the Emigration.

The day of the King's entry into Paris was the first of the emigration of the noblesse. The violent aristocratical party, finding all their coercive measures overturned, and dreading the effects of popular resentment, left the kingdom. The Count d'Artois, the Prince of Condé, the Prince of Conti, Marshal Broglio, and the whole family of the Polignacs, set off in haste, and arrived in safety at Brussels,—a fatal example of defection, which, being speedily followed by the inferior nobility, produced the most disastrous consequences. But it was the same in all the subsequent changes of the Revolution. The leaders of the royalist party, always the first to propose violent measures, were at the same time unable to support them when furiously opposed; they diminished the sympathy of the world at their fall from so high a rank, by showing that they were unworthy of it.[2]

[2] Mig. i. 68. Toul. i. 83. Th. i. 108.

The Ministry fly. Neckar recalled, July 21.

The whole Ministry being impeached by the National Assembly, followed the example of the nobility by flying from the country; and, at the same time, M. Neckar, and the popular leaders, were recalled. The messenger overtook him at Bâle, to which place he had arrived on his journey to his native country. His return to Paris was a continued triumph. Every

where he received the most intoxicating proofs of public gratitude; but his entry to Paris was not only the zenith of his popularity, but also its end. He seemed to have a presentiment of his approaching fall, for, on entering his apartment at Versailles, he exclaimed to one of his friends,—"Now is the moment that I should die!"[1] CHAP. III. 1789.

[1] Toul. i. 85. Mig. i. 68.

A melancholy proof awaited him of the inability even of the most popular minister to coerce the fury of the populace: Long lists of proscription had for a considerable time been fixed at the entrances of the Palais Royal, at the head of which was the name of M. Foulon, an old man above seventy years of age, who had been appointed to the Ministry which succeeded Neckar, but never entered upon his office. He was seized in the country, and brought into Paris with his hands tied behind his back. The vengeance of the people could not wait for the forms of trial and condemnation; they broke into the committee-room where he was undergoing an examination before La Fayette and Bailly, and, in spite of the most strenuous efforts on their part, tore him from their arms, and hung him up to the lamp-posts. Twice the fatal cord broke, and the agonized wretch fell to the ground in the midst of the multitude; and twice they suspended him again amidst peals of laughter and shouts of joy. It was with such terrific examples of wickedness that the regeneration of the social body commenced in France.[2] Murder of Foulon and Berthier. July 22.

[2] Lac. vii. 117. Mig. i. 68. Th. i. 115, 117.

M. Berthier, son-in-law to M. Foulon, soon after shared the same fate. He was arrested at Compeigne, and, after undergoing the utmost outrages on the road, was brought to the hôtel de Ville, where the mob presented to him the head of his parent, yet streaming with blood. He averted his eyes, and, as

CHAP. III. 1789. they continued to press it towards his face, bowed to the ghastly remains. The efforts of Bailly and La Fayette were again unsuccessful; he was seized by the mob, and dragged towards the lamp-post; but at the sight of the cord, which they prepared to put about his neck, he was seized with a transport of indignation, and, wresting a musket from one of the National Guard, rushed into the troop of his assassins, and fell pierced with innumerable wounds. One of the cannibals fell on his body, and tore out his heart, which he bore about in triumph, almost before it had ceased to beat. The heads of Berthier and Foulon were put on the end of pikes, and paraded, in the midst of an immense crowd, through the streets of Paris.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 117, 118. Toul. i. 86. Th. i. 117.

Horror-struck at these sanguinary excesses, M. Neckar demanded of the Assembly of Electors at Paris, and obtained, a general amnesty for political offences. His chief object in doing so was to save the life of the Baron de Besenval, second in command under the Marshal Broglio, formerly his political opponent, whom, at the hazard of his own life, he had generously saved from the fury of the people on his road from Bâle, at the distance of a few leagues from Paris. But in taking this humane step, Neckar experienced, for the first time, his inability to rule the Revolution, and felt the thinness of the thread on which the applause of the people is founded. His efforts were nugatory. On the following day Mirabeau brought the matter under the consideration of the Assembly.—"Whence comes it," said he, "that the municipality takes upon itself, under the very eyes of the Assembly, to publish an amnesty for offences? Has the cause of freedom then no more perils to encounter? We may pardon M. Neckar

his generous but indiscreet proceeding, which in any other but him would have been criminal; but let us, with more calmness and equal humanity, establish the public order, not by general amnesties, but a due separation of the judicial functions from those of the multitude." The Assembly, accordingly, reversed the decree of the electors of Paris, and political revenge received ample scope for its developement.[1] CHAP. III. 1789.

[1] Lac. vii. 122, 127. Mig. i. 68, 69. Th. i. 119.

The consequences of the insurrection of 14th July were immense. The movement of Paris was communicated to the provinces; every where the lower orders, in imitation of the capital, organized themselves into independent bodies, subject to their respective municipalities, and established national guards for their protection. The immediate cause of this prodigious armament was the propagation through all France of the most alarming reports as to the approaching destruction of the harvest by brigands, who were traversing the country in all directions,—a stratagem played with the most complete success by the leaders of the Revolution, in order to place the armed force of the kingdom at their disposal.[2] Consequences of the 14th July.

[2] Th. i. 126.

Three hundred thousand men were speedily enrolled for the support of the popular side; the influence of Government, as well as the power of the sword, passed into the hands of the people. The new magistrates were appointed by the mob, and of course taken from the most zealous supporters of the popular right; their authority alone was respected. The old functionaries, finding their power gone, every where became extinct. In less than a fortnight there was no authority in France but what emanated from the people.[3]

[3] Mig. i. 69, 70. Toul. i. 97.

But the effects of this Revolution on the order of

CHAP. III. 1789.

Dreadful confusion and anarchy in France.

society were at first lamentable in the highest degree. The regiments of the line every where declared for the popular side; the whole populace possessed themselves of arms; no power any where remained to resist the insurrection of the lower orders. At Caen, and several other towns, the massacres of the metropolis were too faithfully imitated. M. de Belzunce, who endeavoured to restrain the excesses of his regiment, was put to death with the most aggravated circumstances of cruelty; his remains were literally *devoured* by his murderers.[1] Every where the peasants rose in arms, attacked and burnt the chateaux of the landlords, and massacred or expelled the possessors. The horrors of the insurrection of the Jacquerie, in the time of Edward III., were revived on a greater scale, and with deeper circumstances of atrocity. In their blind fury they did not even spare those seigneurs who were known to be inclined to the popular side, or had done the most to mitigate their sufferings, or support their rights. The most cruel tortures were inflicted on the victims who fell into their hands; many had the soles of their feet roasted over a slow fire before being put to death; others had their hair and eyebrows burnt off, while they destroyed their dwellings, after which they were drowned in the nearest fish-pond. The Marquis of Barras was cut into little bits before his wife, far advanced in pregnancy, who shortly after died of horror; the roads were covered with young women of rank and beauty flying from death, and leading their aged parents by the hand. It was amidst the cries of agony, and by the light of conflagration, that liberty arose in France.[2]

[1] Lac. vii. 129.

[2] Lac. vii. 130, 132. Th. i. 127. Chateaub. Mem. 83, 84.

The Assembly published several energetic proclamations against these acts of violence, but they had

not the slightest effect in repressing them. Indeed, they were so far committed in a contest with the crown and the aristocracy, that instead of repining they rejoiced in secret at atrocities which seemed necessary to complete the intimidation of their adversaries. They felt that they had put themselves in a situation where they must either fear the noblesse, or be feared by them. Thus, for decency's sake, they blamed openly, and applauded privately; they conferred praises on the constituted authorities, and in secret gave encouragement to license. The usual consequence of violent usurpation is, to compel men to plunge deeper into the stream of revolution, and commit the greater crimes, to save themselves from the consequence of the lesser which they have already perpetrated.[1]

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[1] Dumont, 133, 134.

Nor were these disorders confined to the provinces. Paris was in such a state of confusion, the disorder arising from so many co-existing authorities was so excessive, the supply of provisions so precarious, that the utmost exertions of Bailly and the municipality were required to prevent the people from dying of famine in the streets. Tailors, shoemakers, bakers, blacksmiths, met at the Louvre, the place Louis XV., and other quarters, deliberated on the public concerns, and set at defiance the hôtel de Ville and the municipality. Night and day Bailly and the Committee of Public Subsistence were engaged in the Herculean labour of providing for the wants of the citizens; the usual sources of supply had totally ceased with the public confusion; the farmers no longer brought their grain to market, fearing that it would be seized for nothing by the sovereign multitude; and the people, as the first consequences of their triumph, were on the point of perishing of famine. Every

Misery and famine in Paris.

CHAP. III. 1789. thing required to be provided for and done by the public authorities; large quantities of grain were bought by their agents in the country, and conducted into Paris, like a besieged city, in great convoys, guarded by regiments of horse. It was ground at the public expense, and sold at a reduced rate to the citizens; but such was the anxiety of the people, that all these pains would not suffice, and loud complaints that the citizens were starving, incessantly assailed the Assembly. All the efforts of the Government could not supply the want of that perennial fountain of plenty and prosperity, which arises from public confidence.[1]

[1] Th. i. 111.

Notwithstanding all the efforts of Government, however, the distress in Paris, both on the part of the municipality and the citizens, soon became overwhelming. Almost every species of manufacture was at a stand: the purchases by the wealthy classes had totally ceased, and all the numerous artisans who depended on it, in that great mart of luxury and indulgence, were in the utmost straits. The popular magistrates were obliged to dissipate all the corporate funds at their disposal, but that supply afforded only a temporary relief, and after exhausting their credit, and overwhelming with debt the public revenue, they were obliged to come to the National Assembly, with the piteous tale that their resources were exhausted, and that Paris, as the first fruits of its political regeneration, was on the verge of ruin.*

* "In July, 1789," said M. Bailly, Mayor of Paris, author of the Tennis Court Oath, "the finances of the city of Paris were yet in good order; the expenditure was balanced by the receipts, and she had 1,000,000 francs, (L.40,000,) in the bank. But the expenses she has been constrained to incur subsequent to the Revolution, amount to 2,500,000 francs, (L.100,000,) in a single year. From these expenses, and the great falling off in the produce of the free gifts, not only a mo-

La Fayette, and the officers of the Revolution, were more successful in their efforts to establish an efficient civil force. Military organization, more readily than civil order, grows out of insurrectionary troubles. By incorporating the French Guards, a number of Swiss, and a vast body of deserters from the regiments of the line into the National Guard, he succeeded in composing an efficient force, which, under the name of Companies of the Centre, at length made head against the public disorders. They were all clothed in uniform, and to the colours of the Parisian cockade, blue and red, joined white, the colours of the royal family. Thus was formed the *tricolor cockade*, of which La Fayette nearly predicted the destinies when he said it would make the tour of the globe.[1]

[1] Th. i. 112, 113.

These atrocities were followed by an unexampled proceeding on the part of the National Assembly. On the night of the 4th August, the Duke de Noailles gave the signal for innovation, by proposing that the burden of taxes should fall equally on all; that all the feudal rights should be declared liable to redemption, and personal servitude simply abolished. This, though a great concession, founded alike in justice and expedience, was far from satisfying the popular party. A painful picture of the oppression of feudal rights was drawn, and the generosity of the nobles piqued to consent to their voluntary surrender. They began, contrary to all expectation, to run against each other in proposing the abolition of abuses; the contagion became universal; in a few hours the whole feudal rights were abandoned. The Duke de Chatelet proposed that the redemption of tithes should

Abandonment of feudal rights by nobles. August 4.

mentary, but a total want of money has taken place."—See BURKE'S *Consid. Works*, v. 431.

CHAP. III. 1789.

be allowed, and that they should be commuted into a payment in money; the Bishop of Chartres, the suppression of the exclusive right of the chase. The more important rights of feudal jurisdiction in matters of crime, of the disposal of offices for gain, of pecuniary immunities, of inequality of taxes, of plurality of benefices, of casual emolument to the clergy, of annats to the court of Rome, were successively abandoned; finally, the incorporations and separate states sacrificed their privileges; the Bretons, the Burgundians, the Languedocians, renounced the rights which had withstood the tyranny of Richelieu and Louvois. All the monuments of freedom, which the patriotism of former times had erected, were swept away, and the Liberty established in its stead, founded on an imaginary and inexperienced basis.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 71. Lac. vii. 140. Th. i. 129, 131.

Its prodigious effects.

It has truly been said, that this night changed the political condition of France. It delivered the land from feudal power, the person from feudal dependence, the property of the poor from the rapacity of the rich, the fruits of industry from the extortion of idleness. By suppressing private jurisdictions, it introduced public justice; by terminating the purchase of offices, it led to purity in the discharge of their duties. The career of industry, the stimulus of ambition, was thenceforward opened to all the people, and the odious distinction of noble and roturier, patrician and base-born, the relics of Gothic conquest, for ever destroyed.

Had these changes been introduced with caution, or gradually grown out of the altered condition of society, there can be no doubt that they would have been highly beneficial; but coming as they did suddenly and unexpectedly upon the world, they

produced the most disastrous consequences, and contributed, more than any other circumstance, to spread abroad that settled contempt for antiquity, and total disregard of private right, which distinguished the subsequent period of the French Revolution. The ideas of men were entirely overturned, when rights established for centuries, privileges contended for by successive generations, and institutions held the most sacred, were at once abandoned. Nothing could be regarded as stable in society after such a shock; the chimeras of every enthusiast, the dream of every visionary, seemed equally deserving of attention with the sober conclusions of reason and observation, when all that former ages had done was swept away in the very commencement of improvement. The minds of men were shaken as by the yawning of the ground during the fury of an earthquake; all that the eye had rested on as most stable, all that the mind had been accustomed to regard as most lasting, disappeared before the first breath of innovation. The consequences of such a step could not be other than fatal. It opened the door to every species of extravagance, furnished a precedent for every subsequent spoliation, and led immediately to that ferment of minds, when the most audacious and the least reasonable are sure of obtaining an ascendency.

The event accordingly proved the justice of these principles. "The decrees of the 4th August," says Dumont, "so far from putting, as was expected, a stop to the robbery and violence that was going on, served only to make the people acquainted with their own strength, and to inspire them with a conviction, that all their outrages against the nobility would pass with impunity. Nothing done through fear succeeds in its object.[1] Those whom you hope to disarm by

[1] Dumont, 149.

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concessions, are only led by them to still bolder attempts and more extravagant demands."

Contrast of French and English Revolution.

Nothing can more distinctly mark the different characters of the French and English Revolutions, than the conduct of the two nations in their first measures of legislative improvement after the royal power had fallen. The English were solicitous to justify their resistance by the precedent of antiquity; they maintained "that they had *inherited* this freedom;" and sought only to *re-establish* those ancient landmarks which had disappeared during the indolence or usurpation of recent times.[1] The French commenced the work of reformation by destroying every thing which had gone before them, and sought to establish the freedom of future ages by rooting out every thing which had been done by the past. On the ancient stock of Saxon independence the English engrafted the shoots of modern liberty; in its stead the French planted the unknown tree of equality. In the British isles the plant has become deeply rooted, and expanded widely in its native air; time will show whether the French have not wasted their endeavours in training an exotic, unsuited to the climate, and unfruitful in the soil.

[1] Burke, vii. 72.

Consequences of this measure.

The consequences of this invasion of private right were soon apparent. Three days after, the popular leaders maintained that it was not the power of redeeming, but the *abolition* of tithes, which had been voted; and that all that the clergy had a right to was a decent provision for their members. They found an able but unexpected advocate in the Abbé Siêyes. "If it is yet possible," said he, "to awaken in your minds the love of justice, I would ask, not if it is expedient, but if it is just, to despoil the church? The tithe, whatever it may be in future, does not at

August 7.

Tithes given up by the clergy.

present belong to you. If it is suppressed in the hand of the creditor, does it follow from that that it is extinguished also in that of the debtor, and become your property? You yourselves have declared the tithe redeemable; by so doing you have recognised its legal existence, and cannot now suppress it. The tithe does not belong to the owner of the soil. He has neither purchased it, nor acquired it by inheritance. If you extinguish the tithes, you confer a gratuitous and uncalled-for present on the landed proprietor, who does nothing, while you ruin the true proprietor, who instructs the people in return for that share of its fruits." He concluded with the celebrated expression,—"You would be free, and you know not how to be just."[1] CHAP. III. 1789. [1] Th. i. 134. Dumont, 147.

Mirabeau supported the abolition of the tithes. He argued that the burden of supporting the public worship should be borne equally by all; that the state alone was the judge whether it should fall exclusively on the landed proprietors, or be made good by a general contribution of the citizens; that it robs no one, if it makes such a distribution of the burden as it deems most expedient; and that the oppressive weight of this impost on the small proprietors loudly called for its imposition on the state in general. For this purpose he proposed that the clergy should be paid by salaries. As that expression created some disapprobation, he added, "I know but three ways of living in society: you must be either a beggar, a robber, or a stipendiary." The clergy had the generosity to intrust their interests to the equity of the Assembly; the only return they met with was the suppression of tithes, under the condition that the state should fitly provide for religion and its ministers,—an obligation which was solemnly com- August 13.

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mitted to the honour of the French nation, but which afterwards was shamefully violated, and in fact became perfectly illusory.[1] Thus the first fruits which the clergy derived from their junction with the Tiers Etat, was the annihilation of their property, and the reduction of all themselves to beggary. In this there was nothing surprising; gratitude is unknown in public assemblies. When men vote away the property of others, they can expect no mercy for their own; when the foundations of society are torn up, the first to be sacrificed are the most defenceless of its members.

[1] Lac. vii. 145, 147. Toul. i. 103. Dumont, 147. Th. i. 135.

But the fruits of injustice seldom prosper with nations any more than individuals. The confiscation of the immense landed estates of the church, amounting to nearly a third of France, proved no relief to the public necessities till the issuing of assignats on their security began. Extraordinary as it may appear, it is a well-authenticated fact, that the expenses of managing the church property cost the nation L.2,000,000 a-year more than it yielded, besides in a few years augmenting the public debt by L.7,000,000. This is noways surprising. In the confusion consequent on so great an act of spoliation no account of the revenues of the ecclesiastical domains could be obtained, and the leaders who had sanctioned so great an act of robbery found it impossible, after its commission, to restrain the peculation of their inferior agents.[2] This is the more remarkable, as the ecclesiastical estates produced a clear net revenue of 70,000,000 francs or L.2,800,000 yearly.

[2] Calonne, 81, 92; & Burke, v. 421.

The innovators in the Assembly who had joined in the popular party, from a belief that in so doing lay their only chance of preserving the wreck of their property, now perceived, with bitter regret, the

infatuated course they had pursued, and the hopelessness of any expectation, that, by yielding to revolutionary demands, they would satisfy the people. The Bishop of Chartres, one of the popular bishops who had supported the union of orders, the vote by head, and the new constitution, was then visited by Dumont, when he was dismissing his domestics, selling his effects, and leaving his house to discharge his debts; with tears in his eyes, the benevolent prelate deplored the infatuation which had led him to embrace the cause of the Tiers Etat, which violated in its prosperity all the engagements contracted in its adversity. The Abbé Siêyes, who had taken so decided a part in the early usurpations of the Assembly, was hissed and coughed down, when he strove to resist the iniquitous confiscation. Next day he gave vent to his spleen to Mirabeau, who answered, "My dear abbé, you have unloosed the bull: do you expect he is not to make use of his horns?"[1]

Unavailing regrets of the nobles and clergy who joined the Revolution.

[1] Dumont, 66, 67, 147.

This first and great precedent of iniquity, the confiscation of the property of he church, was brought about by the selfish apathy, or secret wishes, of the great majority of the laity. All classes felt, that the financial difficulties of the state were nearly insurmountable, and all anticipated a sensible relief from any measure, how violent soever, which might lead to their extrication. It was the universal belief that this embarrassment was the main cause of the public difficulties; and the secret hope that the property of the church was the holocaust which would at once put an end to it, was the real cause which occasioned this general and iniquitous coalition. All imagined that some interest must be sacrificed, and the church was pitched upon as at once the most wealthy and defenceless body in the state. But, like all other measures of spoliation,

CHAP. III. 1789. this great invasion on private right rapidly and fatally recoiled on the heads of those who engaged in it. The ecclesiastical estates, it was soon found, in the hands of the revolutionary agents, encumbered as they were with the debts of the clergy, yielded no profit, but were rather a burden to the state: to render them available, the contraction of debt on their security became necessary; the temptation of relieving the public necessities by such a step was irresistible to a public and irresponsible body, holding estates to the amount of nearly two hundred millions sterling in their hands. Hence arose the system of ASSIGNATS, which speedily quadrupled the strength of the republican government, rendered irretrievable the march of the Revolution, and involved all classes in such inextricable difficulties, as rapidly brought home to every interest in the state the spoliation which they had begun by inflicting on the weakest.

Abolition of right of shooting and hunting. Its effects.

The abolition of the exclusive right of hunting and shooting was made the pretext for the most destructive disorders throughout all France. An immense crowd of artisans and mechanics issued from the towns, and, joining the rural populations, spread themselves over the fields in search of game: the greatest violence was speedily committed by the armed and incontrollable multitude. Enclosures were broken down, woods destroyed, houses broken open, robbery perpetrated, under pretence of exercising the newly regained Rights of Man. Mean while, the burning the chateaux, and the plunder of the landed proprietors, continued without intermission, while the Assembly, instead of attempting to check these disorders, issued a proclamation, in which they affected to consider them as the work of aristocrats, who were desirous of bringing odium upon the Revolution.[1] One of the most singular effects of the spirit

Lac. vii. 349. Th. i.

of faction, is the absurdities which it causes to be embraced by its votaries, and their extraordinary credulity in regard to every thing which seems calculated to advance the interests of their party.* CHAP. III. 1789.

The next step of the Assembly was the publication of the famous *Rights of Man*,—a composition which, amidst much obvious and important truth, contains a most dangerous mixture of error, and which, if not duly chastened by the lessons of experience and the observation of history, is calculated to convulse society. It declares the original equality of mankind; that the ends of the social union are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression; that sovereignty resides in the nation, and every power emanates from them; that freedom consists in doing every thing which does not injure another; that law is the expression of the general will; that public burdens should be borne by all the members of the state in proportion to their fortunes; that the elective franchise should be extended to all; and that the exercise of natural rights has no other limit but their interference with the rights of others. In these positions, considered abstractly, there is much in which every reasonable mind must acquiesce; but the promulgation of the agreeable but perilous principles of sovereignty in the people, of the natural equality of mankind, and the extension of the elec- Rights of Man. August 18.

* The people of Versailles already insulted and pelted the nobles and clergy at the gate of the Assembly, whom they stigmatized as *Aristocrats*; an epithet which afterwards became the certain prelude to destruction. It is extraordinary, that the opposite party never affixed any denomination to the Revolutionists, but suffered them to assume the title of "the Nation." It may readily be imagined what an effect this name had in influencing the minds of men, already sufficiently inflamed from other causes. "Epithets and nicknames," said Napoleon, "should never be despised; it is by such means that mankind are governed."[1] [1] Dumont, i. 72.

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tive franchise to every citizen, only prove how ignorant the legislators of that period were of the real character of mankind, and how little they were aware of that inherent depravity, in human nature, to which so many of themselves soon became victims.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 82. Lac. vii. 153.

Opinion entertained of it by its authors.

It is a curious circumstance, illustrative of the tendency of revolutionary excitement to deprive the representatives of the people of any thing approaching to freedom of deliberation, that the authors of this celebrated declaration were, at the time they wrote it, sensible of the absurdity and peril of many of its parts. Dumont, its principal composer, has justly asked,—"Are men all equal? Where is the equality? Is it in virtue, talents, fortune, industry, situation? Are they free by nature? So far from it, they are born in a state of complete dependence on others, from which they are long of being emancipated."[2] Mirabeau himself was so sensible of the absurdity of laying down any code of rights anterior to the formation of the constitution, that he laboured to induce the Assembly to postpone it till that was accomplished; observing, that "any enunciation of right at that time would be but an almanack for a year." But it was too late; the people would admit of no delay; and the deputies, afraid of losing their popularity, published the famous declaration, inwardly execrating the work of their own hands,—a step so perilous, that, as its author himself admits, it was like placing a powder-magazine under an edifice, which the first spark of fire would blow into the air.[3]

[2] Dum. 140. Th. i. 142.

[3] Dumont, 140, 142.

Formation of a constitution.

The great question which next occupied the Assembly was the formation of a constitution; and the discussions regarding it kept the public mind in a state of incessant agitation during the whole of August and September. The committee to whom it was referred to report on the subject, recommended

the inviolability of the King's person, the permanence of the Legislative Body, and a single Chamber for the legislature. This important question, upon which the future progress of the Revolution hinged, was warmly discussed in the clubs of the capital, and the most vehement threats held out to those of the Assembly who were suspected of leaning to the aristocratic side. On the one side, it was argued that the very idea of an Assembly, composed of hereditary legislators, was absurd in a free country; that if it united itself to the throne, it became dangerous to freedom, —if to the people, subversive of tranquillity; that it would operate as a perpetual bar to improvement, and, by constantly opposing reasonable changes, maintain a continual discord between the higher and lower orders; and that the only way to prevent these evils was to blend the whole legislature into one body, and temper the energy of popular ambition by the firmness of aristocratic resistance. On the other hand, it was maintained that the constitution of society in all the European states, necessarily implied a separate body of nobles and commons; that the turbulent spirit of the one was fully counteracted by the tenacious tendency of the other; that a monarchy could not subsist without an upper house to support the throne; that the English constitution afforded decisive evidence of the happy effects of such a separation; that the best consequences had been found to follow the discussion of public matters in separate assemblies, and many fatal resolutions prevented by allowing time for consideration between their deliberations; and that it was a mere mockery to pretend that these restraints could take place, if the legislature was all contained in one chamber, when the nobles would be immediately outvoted,[1] and the whole

August 28.

August 31.

[1] Th. i. 84.

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rights of the monarchy might be voted away in a single sitting. Unfortunately for France, these arguments did not prevail, and a single chamber was adopted by the Assembly.[1]* Nor is it surprising that this was done, for the evils of the aristocracy were pressing, and had been experienced—those of the democracy remote, and were only anticipated. The time soon came when experience taught the ruinous consequences of their decision, and the warmest friends of freedom unanimously adopted a division of the legislature; but it was then too late; the aristocracy was destroyed; the face of society changed; and there remained only the name of a House of Peers, without either their property, their influence, or public utility.

[1] Lac. vii. 159. Riv. 191. Th. i. 152, 154. Mig. i. 84. Dum. 158.

The proceedings of the Assembly in the formation of this constitution were so precipitate, that in the eyes of all reasonable men they prognosticated nothing but ruin to the country. Meditation and thought there passed for nothing; every one seemed only desirous to gratify his own vanity by anticipating the motions of his rivals; every thing was done at the sword's point, as in a place taken by assault; every change pressed on at full gallop. No interval was allowed for reflection, no breathing time given to the passions. After having demolished every thing, they resolved to reconstruct the whole social edifice with the same breathless rapidity; and so extravagant was the opinion of the Assembly of its own powers, that it would willingly have charged itself with the formation of constitutions for all nations.[2] In these monstrous pretensions and ruinous innova-

[2] Dumont, 159, 160.

* It was carried by a majority of 499 to 89. No less than 122 members remained away, intimidated by the threats of the populace.

tions, is to be found the remote but cerain cause of all the blood and horrors of the Revolution.*

Question of the Veto.

The question of the veto, or of the royal sanction being required to validate the acts of the legislature, was next brought under discussion, and excited still more violent passions. One would have thought, from the anxiety manifested on the subject, that the whole liberty of France depended on its decision, and that the concession of this right to the throne would alone restore the ancient *régime*. The multitude, ever governed by words, imagined that the Assembly, which had done so much, would be left entirely at the mercy of the King if this power were conceded,

* The particulars of this constitution, which was soon swept away amidst the violence and insanity of subsequent times, are too complicated and prolix to be susceptible of enumeration in general history, but one vital part of the fabric is deserving of especial attention. By a fundamental article, France was divided into 83 departments: the primary Assemblies, 8000 in number, which were to be convoked every two years to elect the Legislature, consisted of 5,000,000 citizens: in addition to this there were established 48,000 municipal assemblies composed of 900,000 citizens; 547 district assemblies, and 83 departmental assemblies, for the management of the local concerns of the provinces. But the most dangerous part of this highly democratic constitution remained behind. Each of the primary assemblies named an elector for every hundred citizens, who constituted 83 assemblies of 600 persons each, making in all 50,000 for the whole kingdom, who remained *permanently* in possession of their functions for the two years that the legislature sat. These 83 assemblies were invested with powers so considerable that they almost amounted to an establishment of so many separate republics in one great federal union. They nominated, to the exclusion of the King, the whole local authorities, including the bishops and clergy, judges, both supreme and inferior, magistrates and functionaries of every description. They constituted, in short, a permanent *political union*, legally established in every department, elected by universal suffrage, and wielding within that department almost all the influence and authority of Government. The Legislative Assembly, which succeeded the Constituent, was chosen under this constitution, and when the nation had become habituated to the exercise of these powers. It is unnecessary to go farther—that single article in the constitution, carried as it immediately was into practice, is sufficient to explain all the disasters and crimes of the Revolution.—See CALONNE, 360, 361, and *Const.* 1789, § 17.

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and that any privilege left to the disposition of the court would soon become an anti-revolutionary engine. This was the first question since the Revolution in which the people took a vivid interest, and it may easily be conceived how extravagant were their ideas on the subject. They imagined that the veto was a monster which would devour all the powers they had acquired, and deliver them over, bound hand and foot, to the despotism of the throne. Those who supported the veto were instantly stigmatized as inclining to every species of tyranny. The people, without understanding even so much as that, imagined that it was a tax which it was necessary to abolish, or an enemy who should be hanged; and they loudly demanded that he should be suspended by the lamp-post. The clubs of the Palais Royal took the most violent measures, and incessantly besieged the Assembly with menacing deputations; efforts were made to array the municipality in insurrection, and the multitude, armed since the 14th of July, began to give symptoms of revolt. Alarmed by such dangerous signs, the Ministry recommended concession to the King; and he himself preferred a conditional to an absolute veto. The Assembly, by a majority of two to one,* decreed that the King should have a veto, but that his power to decline sanctioning any legislative measure should not extend beyond two successive legislatures.[1]

[1] Th. i. 148, 153. Mig. i. 86, 87. Dum. 156.

August 10.

It is a remarkable fact, singularly illustrative of the rapid progress of revolutionary ideas, when the fever of innovation has once seized upon men's minds, that in all the instructions of the electors to the deputies, without exception, the absolute veto, as well as personal inviolability, had been conceded to the

* By a majority of 613 to 325.

sovereign. A few weeks of agitation—the revolt of the 14th July—the Tennis Court oath—had overturned all these sober resolutions, and the crown was compelled to recede from a privilege which had been unanimously agreed to by the whole kingdom. The instructions in the cahiers, indeed, were most express against almost all the illegal acts and usurpations of the Assembly. They almost invariably secured to the sovereign all the essential prerogatives of the monarchy. They unanimously prescribed a monarchical government for France; that all laws should require the King's sanction to their validity; that he should have the unrestrained right of making peace or war, and appointing the judges; that private property should be inviolate;* and, by a great majority, that the rights, estates, and privileges of the clergy should be maintained. The new constitution, the abolition of the absolute veto, the spoliation of the church, were already a violation of these instructions in their most essential particulars: yet not a voice was raised in France to protest against their monstrous and unauthorized stretches, on the part of the popular representatives: so intoxicating is the possession of power to mankind, and so little are they qualified to bear its seduction, even when the measures to which it leads are most opposed to preconceived ideas, or most at variance with established habits.[1]

[1] Calonne, 124, 125, 127, 214, 215, 304, 305, 319 380. Lac. vii. 162.

On this occasion Mirabeau supported the crown, and argued strenuously in favour of the absolute

Mirabeau supports the Crown in the debate.

* So strongly was this principle expressed in all the cahiers, that the Assembly, by act 17, of the constitution of 5th October, 1789, sanctioned it by a special clause in these terms: "Property of every sort being a sacred and inviolable right, no one can be deprived of it but on the ground of public necessity, legally established and evidently requiring it, and on the condition of a full and ample indemnity."—See *Const.* 1789, *act.* 17; CALONNE, 215.

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veto. "Let us not," said he "arm the sovereign against the legislature, by allowing a moment to exist in which he may become its involuntary instrument. The nation will find more real security in laws consented to by its chief, than in the revolution which would follow the loss of its power. When we have placed the crown in the hands of a particular family, it is in the last degree imprudent to awaken their alarms, by subjecting them to a control which they cannot resist; and the apprehensions of the depository of the whole forces of the monarchy cannot be contemplated without the most serious apprehensions. I would rather live in Constantinople than in France, if laws could there be made without the royal sanction." Words of striking and prophetic import, which were then ill understood or angrily interpreted, but which were recollected with bitter and unavailing regret, when the course of events had proved their truth, and the most vehement of their revilers had perished from their neglect. Mounier and Lally Tollendal on this occasion, though members of the committee appointed to frame the constitution, were the leaders of the party who contended for the division of the Chambers, the absolute veto, and the formation of the constitution on the model of that of England. They even contended for it after the King had, by Neckar's advice, agreed to yield the point. After the vote was passed, they were so much disconcerted, that they withdrew from the committee on the constitution, and shortly after left the Assembly.[1]

[1] Th. i. 154. Lac. vii. 165.

Paris, mean while, was experiencing the convulsions incident to a revolution; all ranks, broke loose from their restraints, were rioting in the exercise of newly acquired franchises. In France, as it has been

well observed, the love of liberty is founded chiefly on the love of power. Every body of men in the capital instantly commenced the exercise of these intoxicating rights; and the electors invariably assumed the government of their representatives. One hundred and eighty delegates, nominated by the districts, assumed a legislative power in the metropolis; but they were in their turn controlled by their constituents, who, without hesitation, annulled their decrees when not suited to their inclinations; and nothing was agreeable but what flattered their ambition. The idea of ruling by commanding their delegates, speedily spread, and was too intoxicating not to be every where well received. All those who were not legally vested with authority began to meet, and to give themselves importance by discussing public affairs; the soldiers had debates at the Oratoire, the tailors at the Colonnade, the hairdressers at the Champs Elysées, the valets at the Louvre.[1] Subsequent ages might smile at such proceedings, if woful experience had not demonstrated how fatal they are in their consequences, and how rapidly the minds of the lower orders become intoxicated by the enjoyment of powers which they are equally incapable of exercising with discretion, or abandoning without convulsions.

State of Paris.

August 15 to 20.

State of anarchy in Paris.

[1] Mig. i. 85. Th. iii.

Mean while, the finances of the kingdom, the embarrassments of which had first occasioned the convocation of the States-General, were daily falling into a worse condition. The lower orders universally imagined that the Revolution was to liberate them from every species of impost; and, amidst the wreck of established authority, and the collision of self-constituted powers, they succeeded for some time in realizing their expectations. The collection of the revenue became every where difficult, in many places

State of the finances.

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27th Aug.

[1] Th. i. 159, 160. Dum. 188. Lac. vii. 170. Burke's Cons. Works, v. 406, 408.

But this was not all: the demands on the Treasury were rising as rapidly as their receipts were falling: the usual effects of a revolution were experienced, an increase in the public expenditure, and a diminution to a most alarming extent of the public income. Not only were the forced purchases of grain by Government, and their sale at a reduced price, unavoidably increasing, but a large body of workmen, thrown out of employment, were maintained at the public expense, for whose support no less than 12,000 francs, or about L.500, was daily issued from the treasury in Paris alone. The King and Queen had sent the whole of their plate to be melted down at the Mint, but it proved an inadequate supply for the public necessities, and assuaged for but a short time the miseries of the poor. Finding this project

ineffectual, the minister had the boldness to propose a contribution of a fourth of the income of each individual, and did not disguise that there was no other alternative, and that the rejection of the measure would lead to a stoppage of the pay of the army and of the interest of the public debt. The proposal was coldly received by the Assembly; but Mirabeau, in a speech of unequalled power, supported it. "Two centuries of depredation and abuse," said he, "have created the gulf in which the kingdom is in peril of being lost. It must be filled up: take the list of the French proprietors, choose among them those whose fortune is adequate to supply the deficiency; let two thousand be sacrificed to the good of the whole. You recoil at the barbarous proposal; alas, do you not see that if you proclaim a bankruptcy, or what is the same thing, refuse this impost, you commit an action not less unjust, and still more destructive? Do you believe that the millions of men who will instantly be ruined by such a step, or by its necessary consequences, will allow you to enjoy the fruits of your villany? that, starving for food, they will suffer you to indulge in your detestable enjoyments? Shall we be the first to give to the world the example of an assembled people being wanting in public faith? Shall the first apostles of freedom sully their hands by an action, which will surpass in turpitude the most corrupted governments? The other day, on occasion of a ridiculous motion in the Palais Royal, they exclaimed, 'Catiline is at the gates of Rome, and you deliberate!' With truth may it be said now, hideous bankruptcy is there; it threatens to consume yourselves, your honours, and your fortunes, and you deliberate!" Carried away by this reasoning, the Assembly voted the supply;[1] but the relief to the treasury was

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24th Sept.

[1] Lac. vii. 178. Th. i. 159, 162.

CHAP. III. 1789. inconsiderable, for the distracted state of the kingdom prevented it from being carried into execution.

Famine in Paris. August 10 to 30.

But while the Assembly was occupied with these discussions, a still more pressing evil began to be felt in the capital. Famine, the natural consequence of the public convulsions—want of employment, the inevitable result of the suspension of credit—pressed severely upon the labouring classes. Mobs became frequent in the streets; the bakers' shops were surrounded by clamorous multitudes demanding food. The most extravagant reports were circulated by the press, and greedily swallowed by the populace, in regard to the causes of the distress. It was the aristocrats who caused the corn to be cut green; they paid the bakers to suspend their labours; they turned aside commerce; they threw the grain into the river; in a word, there was no absurdity or falsehood which they did not implicitly believe. The cry soon became universal, that the measures of the court were the cause of the public distress, and that the only way to provide for the subsistence of the people was to secure the person of the King. An attack upon the palace was openly discussed in the clubs, and recommended by the orators of the Palais Royal; while the agitated state of the public mind, and the number of unemployed artisans who filled the streets, rendered it but too probable that these threats would speedily be carried into execution. Alarmed at these dangers, the court deemed it indispensable to provide for their own security, which hitherto depended entirely on the fidelity of four hundred of the Garde du Corps, who remained on guard at the palace. For this purpose, the regiment of Flanders, and some troops of horse, were brought to Versailles. The arrival of these troops renewed the alarm of the people; the King, at

the head of 1500 soldiers, was supposed to be ready to fall upon the insurgent capital, containing an hundred thousand armed men, and it was alleged with more probability by the better informed, that the design of the court was to retire with such of the troops as remained faithful to Metz, where the Marquis de Bouillé, at the head of his army, was to join them, and there declare the States-General rebellious, and revert to the royal declaration of 20th June.[1]

[1] Dum. 176. Lac vii. 184. Toul. i. 130. Mig. i. 87. Th. i. 164, 166.

Banquet at Versailles, 1st October.

The minds of the populace were in the highest state of excitation from these causes, when an accidental incident blew the train into an explosion. A public dinner, according to an old custom in the French army, was given upon their arrival, by the Garde du Corps, to the officers of the regiment of Flanders, and of the Urban Guard of Versailles. The banquet was held in the saloon of the opera, while the boxes were filled with illustrious spectators, and all the rank and elegance which still adhered to the court, graced the assembly by their presence. The enthusiasm of the moment, the recollection of the spot, formerly the scene of all the splendour of Versailles, the influence of assembled beauty,—all conspired to awaken the chivalrous feelings of the military; the health of the King was drunk with enthusiasm, and the wish loudly expressed that the royal family would show themselves to their devoted defenders. The officers of the Swiss, and of some other regiments, were admitted to the repast; and the King appeared, attended by the Queen, the Dauphin, and Madame Elizabeth. At this sight, the hall resounded with acclamations, and the monarch, unused to the expression of sincere attachment, was melted into tears. After the royal family retired, the musicians of the court struck up the pathetic

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and well-known air, "Oh! Richard, oh, my King, the world abandons you!" At these sounds, the transports of the moment overcame restraint; the officers drew their swords, and scaled the boxes, where they were received with enthusiasm by the ladies of the court, and decorated with white cockades, by fair hands trembling with agitation.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 89 Lac. vii. 185, 189. Toul. i. 132. Th. i. 167.

Agitation in Paris at this news.

The intelligence of this repast was speedily spread through Paris, magnified by credulity, and augmented by malignant ambition. It was universally credited the following morning at the Palais Royal, in the clubs, and market places, that the dragoons had sharpened their sabres, trampled under foot the tri-color cockade, and sworn to exterminate the Assembly and the people of Paris. The influence of the ladies of the court, and the distribution of the white or black cockades, was represented as particularly alarming, by those who had employed the seductions of the Palais Royal to shake the allegiance of the French guards. Symptoms of insurrection speedily manifested themselves, the crowds continued to accumulate in the streets in an alarming manner, until at length, on the morning of the 5th, the revolt openly broke out. A young woman seized a drum, and traversed the streets, exclaiming, "Bread! bread!" She was speedily followed by a crowd, chiefly composed of females and boys, which rolled on till it reached the hôtel de Ville, which was broken open, and pillaged of its arms. It was even with difficulty that the infuriated rabble were prevented from setting it on fire. In spite of all opposition, they broke into the belfry, and sounded the tocsin, which soon assembled the ardent and formidable bands of the Fauxbourgs. The cry immediately arose, raised by the agents of the Duke of Orleans, "To Versailles!" and

a motley multitude of drunken women and tumultuous men, armed and unarmed, set out in that direction. The national guard, which had assembled on the first appearance of disorder, impatiently demanded to follow; and although their commander, La Fayette, exerted his utmost influence to retain them, he was at length compelled to yield, and at seven o'clock, the whole armed force of Paris set out for Versailles. The French guard, which formed the centre of the national guard, openly declared their determination to seize the King, and exterminate the regiment of Flanders and the body guard, who had dared to insult the national colours. Hints were even thrown out that the monarch should be deposed, and the Duke of Orleans nominated Lieutenant-General of the kingdom.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 189, 195, 199. Toul. i. 134. Mig. i. 90. Th. i. 170, 174.

The partisans of this ambitious and wicked, but irresolute prince, had important designs in view in fomenting this burst of popular fury, and directing it to the royal family at Versailles. Their object was to produce such consternation at the court as should induce the King, and all the royal family, to follow the example of the Count d'Artois, and leave the kingdom. The moment this was done, they intended to declare the throne vacant, and offer it, under the title of Lieutenant-General, to the Duke of Orleans. But the firmness of the King and his brother, afterwards Louis XVIII., who saw through the design, caused the plot to fail; and the multitude, who were to be the instruments in producing the alarm, but could not of course be let into the secret, rendered it totally abortive, by insisting, at the close of the tumult, that the King and royal family should be brought to Paris; the event of all others which the Orleans party most ardently desired to avoid.[2]

[2] Memoirs of Louis XVIII. iv. 374.

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State of the Assembly and the Court.

The minds of the members of the Assembly, and of the inhabitants of Versailles, though less violently excited, were in an alarming mood. The King had refused his sanction to the Declaration of the Rights of Man; and the Assembly, piqued at any obstacle to their sovereignty, were in sullen hostility. The Queen had been heard to express her delight at the banquet of the officers; and the assemblage of troops, joined to some hints dropped by the courtiers, led to a general belief that a movement of the seat of the Assembly, and of the court, to Tours or Metz, was in contemplation. No one, however, anticipated any immediate danger; the King was out at a hunting party, and the Assembly just breaking up, when the forerunners of the disorderly multitude began to appear in the streets. At the first intelligence of the disturbance, the monarch returned with expedition to the town, where the appearance of things exhibited the most hideous features of a Revolution. The rails in front of the court-yard of the palace were closed, and the regiment of Flanders, the body guards, and the national guard of Versailles, drawn up within, facing the multitude; while, without, an immense crowd of armed men, national guards, and furious women, uttering seditious cries, and clamoring for bread, were assembled. The ferocious looks of the insurgents, their haggard countenances, and uplifted arms, bespoke but too plainly their savage intentions. Nothing was done to secure the safety of the royal family; though the Swiss guards lay at Ruel and Courbevoie, no attempt was made to bring them to the scene of danger. The commander of the troops, the Count d'Estaing, seemed to have lost that daring spirit which he had formerly evinced, and subsequently displayed on the scaffold.[1]

The mob proceed to Versailles.

[1] Mig. i. 91. Th. i. 168, 172. Lac. ii. 192, 204, 205.

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The multitude soon broke into the hall of the Assembly; and that august body, for the first time, beheld themselves outraged by the popular passions which they had awakened. For above an hour they were insulted by the insolent rabble, who seated themselves on the benches, menaced some of the deputies with punishment, and commanded silence to others. "Lose no time," they exclaimed, "in satisfying us, or blood will soon begin to flow!" Maillard, the orator of the insurgents, openly denounced Mounier, Clermont Tonnerre, and other courageous deputies, who had exposed the designs of the Orleans faction. In the gallery, a crowd of fishwomen were assembled, under the guidance of one virago with stentorian lungs, who called to the deputies familiarly by name, and insisted that their favourite Mirabeau should speak.[1]

And surround the palace.

[1] Dumont, 181, 182. Lac. vii. 208. Toul. i. 135.

In the confusion on the outside, an officer of the guard struck with his sabre a Parisian soldier, who immediately discharged his musket at him; a general discharge of fire-arms from the guards ensued, which produced great consternation, but did little or no execution. The national guard of Versailles, aided by the multitude, followed them to their barracks, whither they had been ordered to retire, forced the gates, pillaged the rooms, and wounded some of the men. The court were in consternation, and the horses already harnessed to the carriages, to convey the royal family from the scene of danger; but the King, who was apprehensive that if he fled, the Duke of Orleans would be immediately declared lieutenant-general of the kingdom, refused to move. The mob soon penetrated into the royal apartments, as the guards were prohibited from offering any resistance, and were received with so much condescension and dignity

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by the King and Queen, that they forgot the purpose of their visit, and left the royal presence, exclaiming *Vive le Roi!* A heavy rain, which began to fall in the evening, cooled the ardour of the multitude, and, before nightfall, the arrival of La Fayette, with the national guard of Paris, restored some degree of order to the environs of the palace.[1]

[1] Memoirs of Louis XVIII., iv. 332. Toul. i. 136, 137. Mig. i. 92.

During these tumults the King was distracted by the most cruel incertitude. Mounier conjured him to vanquish his scruples, and accept simply the articles of the constitution proposed by the Assembly; the Queen, to act boldly, and defend his kingdom. Two carriages, ready harnessed, were kept at the gate of the Orangerie, but the crowd discovered them, and assembled to prevent their departure; the King commanded the Count d'Estaing to disperse the mob at that point, but he declined, alleging that the thing was impossible; the King urged the Queen to depart, and take the royal family with her, but she declared that nothing should induce her, in such an extremity, to separate from her husband. "I know," she added, "that they seek my life; but I am the daughter of Maria Theresa, and have learned not to fear death." Assailed by so many subjects of anxiety, the King at length resolved upon submission, and Mounier was authorized to announce to the Assembly his unqualified acceptance of the nineteen articles of the constitution already framed, and his adhesion to the declaration of the Rights of Man.[2]

[2] Lac. vii. 215, 216, 219. Th. 176.

But matters were now arrived at that pass when these concessions could produce no effect. A multitude of drunken women had broken into the hall of the Assembly, lay extended on its benches, and one shameless Amazon occupied the President's chair, and in derision was ringing his bell. The deputies

in vain endeavoured to restore order; the debates were incessantly interrupted by cries of "Bread! bread!" and nothing but the authority of Mirabeau could procure silence even for the discussion of the measure of providing for the public subsistence. At three in the morning the sitting was broken up, and the hall left in possession of its unruly invaders.[1]

[1] Toul. i. 159.

La Fayette had an interview with the royal family, and assured them of the security of the palace. He added, that he was so well convinced of the pacific disposition of his army, and had so much confidence in the preservation of the public tranquillity, that he was resolved to retire to rest.[2] Misled by these assurances, the Assembly dispersed and repaired to their several homes; and the King and Queen, overcome with fatigue, retired to their apartments. The external posts were intrusted to the troops commanded by La Fayette; the interior were still in the hands of the body guard of the King.[3] Unfortunately for his reputation, and for the honour of France, General La Fayette followed their example, and repaired, for the remainder of the night, to a chateau at some distance from the palace, where he soon after fell asleep.[4]

La Fayette retires to sleep.

[2] Riv. 300.

[3] Th. i. 178.

[4] Riv. 300. Mig. i. 93.

Nothing occurred to interrupt the public tranquillity from three till five in the morning; but the aspect of the populace presaged an approaching storm. Large groups of savage men and intoxicated women were seated round the watchfires in all the streets of Versailles, and relieved the tedium of a rainy night by singing revolutionary songs. In one of these circles their exasperation was such, that, seated on the corpse of one of the body guard, they devoured the flesh of his horse half-roasted in the flames, while a ring of frantic cannibals danced round the group.

CHAP. III. 1789. Every thing announced that they were determined to assuage their thirst for blood by some indiscriminate massacre. At six o'clock a furious mob surrounded the barracks of the body guard, broke them open, and pursued the flying inmates to the gates of the palace, where fifteen were seized and doomed to immediate execution. At the same time, another body besieged the avenues to the palace, and, finding a gate open, rushed in and speedily filled the staircases and vestibules of the royal apartments. Two of the body guard, posted at the head of the stair, made the most heroic resistance, and by their efforts gave time to the Queen to escape into the apartments of the King. The assassins rushed into her room a few minutes after she had left it, and, enraged at finding their victim escaped, pierced her bed with their bayonets.[1] The whole interior of the palace was ransacked by the savage multitude; the splendour of ages was suddenly exposed to the indiscriminate gaze of the lowest of the people.

The mob break into the palace.

[1] Mig. i. 93. Lac. vii. 217, 232, 233. Th. i. 180. Riv. 305, 313.

> Apparet domus intus, et atria longa patescunt:
> Apparent Priami et veterum penetralia regum:
> Armatosque vident stantes in limine primo.

But for the intrepid defence of the body guard, and the exertions of the Marquis de Vaudrueil, who succeeded in reviving in the French guards some sparks of their ancient loyalty, the King himself, and the whole royal family, would have fallen a prey to the assassins. They dragged the bodies of two of the body guard, who had been massacred, below the windows of the King, beheaded them, and carried the bloody heads in triumph upon the point of their pikes through the streets of Versailles.[2]

Almost murder the Queen.

[2] Lac. vii. 234, 237. Riv. 307. Mig. i. 93. Th. i. 180.

At the first alarm General La Fayette, whose unfortunate absence from the scene of danger had pro-

duced such alarming effects, threw himself upon his horse, and hastened to the spot. He made an impassioned harangue to the grenadiers of the guard, and succeeded in prevailing upon them to defend the captives. The fifteen prisoners were thus rescued from impending death; and the King himself having come to the windows and demanded their lives from the multitude, they ultimately escaped. Three others, who had already the halter about their necks, and were on the point of being strangled, were saved by some of these brave men, who flew to their deliverance, exclaiming, "Let us save the body guard, as they saved us at Fontenoy!"[1] Amidst the fury of the multitude, and the atrocity of faction, it is pleasing to record, that in moments of extreme danger the ancient generosity of the French military character manifested itself on both sides of the contest.

[1] Lac. vii. 238. Riv. 309. Th. i. 180.

The conduct of the Queen during these moments of alarm was worthy of the highest admiration. Notwithstanding the shots which were fired at the windows, she persisted in appearing at the balcony, to endeavour to obtain the pardon of the body guards, who were in peril from the exasperated multitude: when M. Luzerne endeavoured to place himself between her and the danger, she gently removed him, alleging that that was her post, and that the King could not afford to lose so faithful a servant. Shortly after the crowd vociferously demanded that she should appear at the window; she came forth, accompanied with her children; twenty thousand voices immediately exclaimed, "Away with the children!" and the Queen, sending them in, reappeared alone, in presence of a mob from whom she expected instant death. The generous contempt of personal danger overcame the fury of the populace,[2] and universal shouts of applause

Heroic conduct of the Queen.

[2] Riv. 312. Luc. vii. 241. Th. i. 182.

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testified their sense of the reality of the peril which she had braved.

The leaders of the tumult now resolved to derive some advantage from their success, by removing the King and the royal family to Paris, where they would be entirely subjected to their control. Immediately the cry was raised among the populace, "Let us bring the King to Paris! it is the only way of securing bread to our children." La Fayette persuaded the King, as the only means of appeasing the tumult, to accede to the wishes of the people, and, accompanied by the King and Queen, appeared at the balcony of the palace, and gave that assurance to the multitude. The Assembly, informed of his determination, hastily passed a resolution, that it was inseparable from the King, and would accompany him to the capital. Thus, the democratical party, as the fruit of their violence, obtained the immense advantage of having both branches of the legislature transferred to a place where their own influence was irresistible.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 94, 95. Riv. 31. Th. i. 182.

The Royal Family come to Paris. October 8.

At noon the royal party set out for Paris; a hundred deputies of the Assembly accompanied their carriage. All their exertions, all the authority of M. La Fayette, were unable to prevent the people from carrying in the front of the procession the two heads of the privates of the body guard who had been decapitated under the windows of the palace. The remains of that gallant band, almost all wounded, and in the deepest dejection, followed the carriage; around it were cannon, dragged by the populace, bestrode by frantic women; from every side arose songs of triumph, mingled with revolutionary songs. "Here is the baker, his wife, and the little apprentice!" exclaimed the women, in derision at the King, the Queen, and the Dauphin. Loaves of bread, borne on

the point of lances, every where appeared, to indicate the plenty which the return of the sovereign was expected to confer upon the capital. The monarch, after a painful journey of seven hours, during which he was compelled to drink, drop by drop, the bitterest dregs in the cup of humiliation, entered Paris, a captive among his own subjects, and adorning the triumph of the most inveterate of his enemies. He was conducted to the hôtel de Ville, and thence to the Tuileries, which thenceforward became his palace and his prison.[1]

[1] Mig i. 95. Riv. 322, 323. Th. i. 182. Lac. vii. 248. Burke, v. 142.

Thus terminated the first era of the Revolution; a period more fruitful in great events than any which had occurred since the foundation of the monarchy. Just five months had elapsed since the meeting of the States-General, and during that time not only the power of the sovereign had been overthrown, but the very structure of society changed. Instead of an absolute government, had succeeded a turbulent democracy; instead of an obsequious nobility, a discontented legislature; instead of the pride of ancient, the insolence of newly-acquired power. The right to tithes, the most venerable institution of the Christian church; the feudal privileges, coeval with the first conquest of Gaul by the followers of Clovis; the immunities of corporations, purchased by the blood of infant freedom, had all perished. The principle of universal equality had been recognised; all authority admitted to flow from the people; and the right of insurrection numbered among the most sacred of the social duties. The power of the sovereign was destroyed; he had been insulted, and narrowly escaped being murdered, in his own palace; and was now a captive, surrounded by perils, in the midst of his capital. Changes which were hardly brought

Vast changes introduced by the Assembly.

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about in England since the time of Alfred, were effected in France in less than five months.

Their excessive rashness.

Experience might well have taught the promoters of the French Revolution, that such excessive precipitation could lead to nothing but disastrous results. Nothing durable in nature is made but by the slowest degrees; the flowers of the summer are as ephemeral as the warmth which produces them; the oak, the growth of centuries, survives the maturity and the decay of empires. The dominion of Alexander, raised in a few years, perished within the lifetime of those who witnessed its birth; the Roman empire, formed in a succession of ages, endured a thousand years. It is in vain to suppose that the habits of a nation can be changed, and its character altered, by merely giving it new institutions. We cannot give to childhood the firmness of maturity, by putting on the dress of manhood.

It is no apology for the constituent Assembly, to say that they committed no violence themselves; that their measures were in great part adopted from the purest philanthropy; that they were themselves the victims of the faction which disgraced the Revolution. In public men we expect not merely good intentions, but prudent conduct; it is no excuse to those who have done evil, to assert they did so that good might come of it. If we pull down with too much haste, we do as much mischief as if we retain with too much obstinacy: the virtuous should always recollect, that if they remove the half, the reckless will speedily destroy the whole.

Danger of sudden innovation.

The danger of political changes arises not from their immediate, but their ultimate consequences; not from those who originate, but those who follow them up. Alterations once rashly commenced, cannot

easily be stopped; the fever of innovation seizes the minds of the energetic part of mankind, and the prudent speedily become unable to stem the torrent. The prospect of gain rouses the ambitious and the reckless; they issue from obscurity to share the spoil, and in the struggle rapidly acquire an ascendency. They do so, because they are not restrained by the scruples which influence the good, nor by the apprehensions which paralyse the opulent. Having nothing to lose, they are indifferent as to the consequences of their actions; having no principles, they accommodate themselves to those of the most numerous and least worthy of the people. Revolutions are chiefly dangerous, because they bring such characters into public situations; the Constituent Assembly was chiefly blamable, because it pursued a course which roused them from every part of France. CHAP. III. 1789.

They themselves were the first to experience the truth of these principles. In their haste to subdue the throne they raised the people, and speedily became subjected to the power they expected to govern. The victory of the 5th of October was not less over the legislature than the throne; brought to Paris without protection, they were at the mercy of the populace, and not less enthralled than the King in his prison. The ultimate consequence did not appear for some years; but the Reign of Terror flowed naturally from the publication of the Rights of Man, and the decimation of the Convention from the rashness of the Constituent Assembly.

Faults were committed on both sides; inexperience in the management of so unparalleled a convulsion may excuse them in the commencement of the French Revolution; but their consequences are not the less clearly marked for the instruction of future ages. Errors on both sides.

I. The government unquestionably erred in delay-

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ing too long the important step of redressing the grievances that were complained of. The declaration of Louis, on 23d June, removed all the real evils of France; it would have been hailed with transport at an earlier period, and the monarch who granted it, celebrated as a second Marcus Aurelius;[1] coming as it did during a period of excitement, it rather betrayed weakness than inspired confidence. Conciliatory measures are admirable, if pursued by government before war is declared; they are ruinous, if attempted by a general on the eve of battle.

[1] Bailly, i. 127. Th. i. 32.

II. M. Neckar as clearly erred in doubling the number of the Tiers Etat; Napoleon ascribed to that ill-judged step all the subsequent horrors of the Revolution.[2] By doing so, he rendered omnipotent a single interest in the commonwealth, and reduced the States-General, when assembled together, to a state of entire dependence on one of its branches. So great an accession of power to any body is at all times dangerous, but it becomes doubly so when that body is in a state of ferment, and ambitious to overleap the barriers of the other classes in the state. M. Neckar was seduced into this step by the intoxicating prospect of a popular administration; he found his influence gone when the boon was conceded, and he was constrained to resist the increasing demands of the people.

[2] Bour. viii. 109. Interview with young Neckar.

III. When the fatal measure of doubling the commons was once adopted, it became indispensably necessary to maintain the separation of the Chambers. It was a mere mockery to expect the nobles and the clergy to keep their place in an Assembly where they were immediately outvoted by a majority of two to one. What would be the fate of England, if its three hundred peers were sent to contend, in moments of agitation, with six hundred popular representatives in

the House of Commons? This point should never have been conceded; it is contrary to the constitution of every European government, and was attended with such disastrous consequences, that the National Convention itself was compelled in the end to re-establish the separation of the Chambers, and rescind that very Tennis Court Oath which at first excited such universal transports.

IV. The accession of the clergy to the Tiers Etat was the immediate cause of the compulsory union of the Chambers; its first effect was the annihilation of the whole property of the church. The case was exactly the same in Scotland; the efforts of the clergy destroyed the Catholic hierarchy, and the barons instantly seized its whole property, and reduced the Protestant ministers to a state of beggary. Such is the progress of revolutions; the ambitious take advantage of the simplicity or enthusiasm of the good, and smile when they are expected to relinquish any part of the spoil which they have gained by their aid, and enjoy at their expense. Gratitude is never to be expected from public bodies; and none are more certain of destruction than those whose assistance first put the movement in motion, the instant they attempt to coerce its excesses.

V. Beyond all doubt, the revolt of the French guards was the most decisive event in the Revolution; it speedily drew after it the defection of the whole army. The treason of a single regiment, by shaking the confidence of the remainder in each other, produced the most fatal consequences. The French government, in this respect, grievously erred in intrusting the defence of the metropolis to a body of men, constituted as the *Gardes Françaises* were; that is, constantly dwelling within its walls, intimate with

CHAP. III. 1789. its citizens, sharing its sentiments, and corrupted by its enjoyments. Like the Prætorian Guards, their proximity to the capital overawed its inhabitants, while their familiarity with its vices seduced their allegiance. No true spirit of patriotism animated their bosoms; they forgot not that they were soldiers to remember they were men; their oaths were broken amidst the fumes of intoxication, their loyalty perished amidst the embraces of courtezans.

VI. The position of the National Assembly, and the residence of the monarch, during its sitting, so near the capital, was a grievous error, of which both had ample cause to repent. Freedom of deliberation was out of the question in such a situation; at first, the deputies were carried away by the contagion of popular feeling; latterly, they were enslaved by the terror of popular violence. All the insurrections which established the Reign of Terror, the captivity of the King, the subjugation of the Assembly, were owing to the perilous vicinity of Paris. If the great work of national reformation is to be successfully carried through, it must be in a remote or secure situation, where the applause and the violence of the multitude are equally removed, and the minds of men are not liable to be swayed by the flattery, or intimidated by the threats, of the people intrusted to their care.

VII. Long before the era at which we have now arrived, the period had come when it behoved the King, and all the friends either of constitutional order or real freedom, to have taken the course of intrepid resistance, or perished in the attempt. The forcible union of the legislature in a single chamber, the confiscation of the church estates, the formation of a highly democratic constitution, inconsistent with any

thing like public order, and the refusal of the absolute veto, in defiance of the cahiers, from every part of France, were all acts of violence, from which nothing but the establishment of democratic tyranny was to be anticipated. But when, in addition to all this, the King was besieged by a furious mob in his own palace, when his apartments were ransacked, and his consort all but murdered by hired assassins, the rule of law as well as of authority was at an end: the hour had arrived to conquer or die. By resistance in that extremity, he at least had a chance of rousing the better class of the nation to his and their own defence; but for the fatal emigration of the noblesse, he unquestionably would have done so. But to yield to such outrages, to submit to be led a captive amidst drunken mobs to his own palace, was to place his neck beneath the lowest of the populace, and prepare, in the unresisted ascendant of guilt, for all the sanguinary excesses which followed.[1]

[1] Mounier, ii. 90, 91.

But the most ruinous step of the Constituent Assembly, that which rendered all the others irreparable, was the great number of revolutionary interests which they created. By transferring political power into new and inexperienced hands, who valued the acquisition in proportion to their unfitness to exercise it; by creating a host of new proprietors, dependent upon the new system for their existence; by placing the armed and civil force entirely at the disposal of the populace, they founded lasting interests upon the fleeting fervour of the moment, and perpetuated the march of the Revolution, when the people would willingly have reverted to a monarchical government. The persons who had gained either power or property by these changes, it was soon found, would yield them up only to force; the individuals

Fatal creation of revolutionary interests.

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who would be endangered by a return to a legal system, strove to the utmost of their power to prevent it. The prodigious changes in property and political power, therefore, which the Constituent Assembly introduced, rendered the alternative of a Revolution, or a bloody Civil War, unavoidable; for though passion is fleeting, the interests which changes created by passion may have produced, are lasting in their operation. The subsequent annals of the Revolution exhibited many occasions on which the people struggled hard to shake off the tyranny which it had created; none in which the gainers by its innovations did not do their utmost to prevent a return to a constitutional or legal government. This was the great cause of the difference between the subsequent progress of the French and the English Revolutions; the Long Parliament and Cromwell made no essential changes in the property or political franchises of Great Britain, and consequently, after the military usurper expired, no powerful revolutionary interests existed to resist a return to the old constitution. In France, before the Constituent Assembly had sat six months, they had rendered a total change of society unavoidable, because they had transferred to the multitude the influence or possessions of a great portion of the state.

The Constituent Assembly, if it has done nothing else, has at least bequeathed one important political lesson to mankind, which is the vanity of the hope, that by conceding to the demands of a revolutionary party for an increase of political power, it is possible to put a stop to farther encroachments. It is the nature of such a desire, as of every other vehement passion, to be insatiable; to feed on concessions and acquisitions; and become more powerful and danger-

ous in proportion as less remains for it to obtain. This truth was signally demonstrated by the history of this memorable Assembly. Concession there went on at the gallop; the rights of the king, the nobles, the clergy, the parliament, the corporations, the provinces, were abandoned as fast as they were attacked. Resistance was nowhere attempted; and yet the popular party incessantly rose in their demands. Democratic ambition was never so violent as when it had triumphed over every other authority in the state. The legislature, the leaders of the state, in vain strove to maintain their ascendency by giving up every thing which their antagonists demanded; in proportion as they receded, their opponents advanced, and the party which had professed at first a desire only for a fair proportion of political influence, soon became indignant if the slightest opposition was made to its authority.[1]

[1] Burke's Consid. v. 89.

This extraordinary fact suggests an important conclusion in political science, which was first enunciated by Mr Burke, but has, since his time, been abundantly verified by experience.[2] This is, that there is a wide difference between popular convulsions which spring from real grievances, and those which arise merely from popular zeal or democratic ambition. There is a boundary to men's passions when they act from reason, resentment, or interest, but none when they are stimulated by imagination or ambition. Remove the grievances complained of, and when men act from the first motives, you go a great way towards quieting a commotion. But the good or bad conduct of a government, the protection men have enjoyed, or the oppression they have suffered under it, are of no sort of moment, when a faction, proceeding on speculative grounds, is thoroughly heated against its form-

[2] Burke, vi. 239.

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It is the combination of these two different principles, so opposite in nature and character, but yet cooperating at the moment in the same effect, which renders the management of a nation in such circumstances so extremely difficult; for the concessions and reforms which are the appropriate remedies for, and are best calculated to remove, the discontent arising from the real grievances, are precisely the steps most likely to rouse to the highest pitch the fervour springing from the imaginative passions.

The errors of the Constituent Assembly may all be traced to one source; the evils of despotism were recent, and had been experienced, those of democracy remote, and hitherto unfelt. No such excuse will remain for any subsequent legislature. If the French Revolution had done nothing else, it has conferred a lasting blessing on mankind by exposing the consequences of hasty innovation, and writing in characters of blood the horrors of anarchy on the page of history. Let us hope that the dreadful lesson has not been taught in vain; that a whole generation has not perished under the guillotine, or been crushed beneath the car of ambition, only to make way for a repetition of the errors by future ages; and that from the sanguinary annals of its suffering, the great truth may be learned that true wisdom consists in repairing, not destroying, and that nothing can retard the march of freedom but the violence of its supporters.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE REVOLT AT VERSAILLES TO THE CONCLUSION OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.

ARGUMENT.

Dismissal of the Duke of Orleans—Retirement of Mounier and Lally Tollendal—Tumults in Paris—Trial and Execution of the Marquis Favras—Division of France into Departments—Municipal Regulations—Elective Franchise—Vast Effect of these Changes—Confiscation of the Property of the Church—Issue of Assignats—Sale of Church Property—Its Effects on the Subdivision of Land—Vehement resistance of the Clergy—Abolition of Titles of Honour—Judicial Establishment—Military Organization—General Establishment of National Guards and Armed Pikemen—Fête of 14th July, the Anniversary of the Storming of the Bastile—Accusation of the Duke of Orleans and Mirabeau—Neckar's Fall—Change of Ministry—Revolt at Metz and Sedan—M. de Bouillé—Ecclesiastical Oath—Its Ruinous Effects—Revolutionary Law of Inheritance—Clubs in Paris—Jacobins—Cordeliers—General Emigration—Discussion on a Law against the Emigrants—Mirabeau joins the Throne—His Death—Plans of the Court—Journey to Varennes—Arrest of the King, and his Return to Paris—First Origin of Republican Principles—Royal Authority suspended—Debate on the Impeachment of the King—Vigorous Measures of the Assembly—Revolt in the Champs de Mars—Victory of La Fayette—Failure to follow up the step—Proposed modification of the Constitution—Self-denying Ordinance—The King nominally reinvested with his Power—Closing of the Assembly—Its immense Changes—General Reflections on its Errors and beneficial Measures.

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"SEMPER in civitate," says Sallust, "quibus opes nullæ sunt, bonis invident, malos extollunt; vetera odere, nova exoptant, odio suarum rerum mutari omnia student; turba atque seditionibus sine cura aluntur; quoniam egestas facile habetur sine damno. Sed urbana plebes ea vero præceps ierat multis de causis; nam qui ubique probro atque petulantia maxime præstabant, item alii per dedecora patrimoniis amissis, postremo omnes quos flagitium aut

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facinus domo expulerat, hi Romam sicuti in sentinam confluxerant."[1]* The French Assembly experienced the truth of these principles in a remarkable manner, upon the removal of the seat of its deliberations to the metropolis. To the natural depravity of a great city, its population added the extraordinary corruption arising from the profligacy and irreligion of preceding reigns. Never were objects of such magnitude offered to the passions of a people so little accustomed to coerce them; never was flattery so intoxicating poured into the minds of men so little fitted to withstand it. The National Assembly, with a fatal precipitance, placed itself without any protection at the mercy of the most corrupted populace in Europe, at the period of their highest excitation.

[1] Sallust, Bellum Cat. § 37.

The removal of the court to Paris produced immediate changes of importance in the contending parties. The Duke of Orleans was the first to decline. General La Fayette exerted himself to show that he was the secret author of the disturbances which had so nearly proved fatal to the royal family, and declared publicly that he possessed undoubted proofs of his accession to the tumult, with the design of making himself lieutenant-general of the kingdom. "The coward!" said Mirabeau, "he has the appetite for crime, but not the courage to execute it."[2] Even at

Duke of Orleans sent to England. 14th Oct.

[2] Toul. i. 152. Lac. vii. 259. Th. i. 184, 185, 186.

* "In every country, those who have no property envy the good, extol the bad, deride antiquity, support innovation, desire change from the alarming state of their own affairs, live on mobs and tumults, since poverty has nothing to fear from such convulsions. But many causes made the city populace preeminent in these respects; for whoever in the provinces were most remarkable for their depravity or self-sufficiency, all who had lost their patrimony, or their place in society, all whom wickedness or disgrace had driven from their homes, found their way to Rome as the common sewer of the republic."—SALLUST, *Cat. War*, § 37.

the Palais Royal his influence was lost, except with his hireling supporters; and the King, glad to get quit of so dangerous a subject, with the entire concurrence of the National Assembly, sent him into honourable exile on a mission to the court of London.

From this departure nothing but good was to be expected; but the secession of other members diminished the influence of reason in the Assembly. Mounier and Lally Tollendal, despairing of the cause of order, retired from the capital; and the former established himself in Dauphiny, his native province, where he endeavoured to organize an opposition to the Assembly.* The departure of these virtuous patriots was a serious calamity to France; it weakened the friends of rational freedom, and by extending the fatal example of defection, left the country a prey to the ambitious men who were striving to raise themselves on the public calamities. They had expected that the people, after having delivered the Assembly on the 14th July, would immediately submit themselves to its authority; they were the first to find that popular commotions are more easily excited than regulated, and that the multitude will not shake off one authority merely to subject themselves to another. The heroes of the nation, on occasion of the

Retirement of Mounier and Lally Tollendal.

* The latter thus justified himself to one of his friends for retiring from public life.—"My health renders my continuance in the Assembly impossible; but, laying that aside, I could no longer endure the horror occasioned by that blood, those heads, that Queen half-murdered, that King led a captive in the midst of assassins, and preceded by the heads of the unhappy guards who had died in his service; those murderers, those female cannibals, that infernal cry, 'A la lanterne tous les evêques;' Mirabeau exclaiming that the vessel of the Revolution, far from being arrested in its course, would now advance with more rapidity than ever; these are the circumstances which have induced me to fly from that den of cannibals, where my voice can no longer be heard, and for six weeks I have strove in vain to raise it."[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 265, 266.

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Tennis Court oath, and the union of the orders, had already fallen into neglect; the Parliaments had been passed by them in the career of democracy, and they were already outstripped by their more ambitious inferiors.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 255. Mig. i. 97. Th. i. 191.

Tumult in Paris. Oct. 11.

The national guard of Paris, under the command of the intrepid La Fayette, who still fondly clung to the illusion that order could be preserved under democratic rule, for some time succeeded in re-establishing tranquillity in the capital. A baker, named Francois, was murdered in the streets on the 19th October, by a mob, who were enraged at finding that the return of the King had not immediately had the effect of lowering the price of provisions. With the savage temper of the times, they put his head on a pike, and paraded it through the streets, compelling every baker whom they met to kiss the remains. The wife of Francois, who was running in a state of distraction towards the hôtel de Ville, met the crowd; at the sight of the bloody head, she fainted on the pavement: they had the barbarity to lower it into her arms, and press the lifeless lips against her face. Such unparalleled atrocity excited the indignation of all the better class of citizens; martial law was proclaimed, and La Fayette, putting himself at the head of the national guard, attacked the mob, and seized the ruffian who carried the head, who was executed next day. The indignant populace murmured at the severity: "What!" they exclaimed; "is this our liberty? We can no longer hang whom we please!"[2]

[2] Toul. i. 168. Mig. i. 98. Th. i. 192. Lac. vii. 262.

The Assembly, acting upon the impulse of the moment, passed a decree against seditious assemblages, known by the name of the decree of *Martial Law*. It was enacted, that on occasion of any serious

public disturbance, the municipality should hoist the red flag, and immediately every group of citizens should disperse, on pain of military execution.[1] Mirabeau, Buzot, and Robespierre, vehemently opposed the measure; they felt the importance of such popular movements to aid their sanguinary designs.

[1] Lac. vii. 263. Th. i. 192. Buzot, 174.

But the people would not relinquish, without a struggle, the agreeable office of public executioners. Two robbers were seized by them, under pretence that the tribunals were too slow in executing justice, and hung upon the spot; a third was on the point of being strangled, when La Fayette arrived with his grenadiers, and inflicted a summary chastisement on those self-constituted authorities. Shortly after, he suppressed with equal vigour and courage a dangerous revolt of the Armed Guard of Paris, which was already beginning to form a nucleus to the disaffected. Yet, even at the time that he was daily exposing his life in his efforts to restore the force of the laws, he was proclaiming from the tribunal of the National Assembly the dangerous doctrine, that "when the people are oppressed, insurrection becomes the most sacred of duties."[2] How often do words, incautiously spoken, produce consequences, which life bravely exposed is unable to prevent!

October 23.

[2] Lac. vii. 267, 269.

The Baron de Besenval, in whose favour M. Neckar had so generously interfered, on his return to Paris, was shortly after tried before the High Court of Chatelet, and acquitted. In preparing for his defence, his counsel had urged him to make use of a document signed by the hand of the King, which authorized him to repel force by force. "God forbid," said he, "that I should purchase life by endangering so excellent a monarch!"[3] and tore the writing

Trial and execution of the Marquis de Favras. Dec. 25, 1789.

[3] Lac. vii. 271.

CHAP. IV. 1790. in pieces. The Marquis de Favras was shortly after brought before the same tribunal, and the indignation of the people at the former acquittal was such, that from the beginning of the trial his fate was certain. The crimes laid to his charge were of the most absurd and incredible description; that of having entered into a conspiracy to overturn the constitution; and it was unsupported by any adequate evidence; but he was condemned by a tribunal which was intimidated by a ferocious multitude, who never ceased exclaiming, even in the hall of justice, "A la lanterne! A la lanterne!" He was conducted at three in the morning, clothed in a white shirt, to the Place de Grève, where, with a torch in his hand, he read with a firm voice his sentence of death, protested his innocence, and died with heroic firmness; the first victim of judicial iniquity which the Revolution had produced.[1]

Feb. 19, 1790.

[1] Lac. vii. 275. Th. i. 210.

He admitted having received 100 louis from a nobleman of high rank, but refused to divulge his name, and uniformly declared that he was no farther implicated in any conspiracy. The people assembled in vast crowds, and with savage joy, to witness his punishment, though it was conducted by torchlight; the unusual spectacle of a marquis being hanged, was a sensible proof of the equality in condition which the Revolution had occasioned; and, after it was over, they mingled in every street brutal jests, with innumerable parodies, of the mode of his execution.[2]

[2] Th. i. 210, 211.

The first legislative measure of the Assembly was directed against the rising jealousies of the provinces. These little states, proud of their ancient privileges, had beheld with regret the extinction of their rights and importance in the increasing sovereignty

of the National Assembly, and were in some places taking measures to counteract its influence. To extinguish their designs, the kingdom was distributed into new divisions, called departments, which were nearly equal in extent and population. Eighty-four of these comprehended the whole kingdom of France; each department was divided into districts, and each district into cantons, which last usually embraced five or six parishes. A criminal tribunal was established for each department; a civil court for each district; a court of reference for each canton. Each department had a council of administration, consisting of thirty-six members, and an executive council, composed of five. The district had its council and directory organized in the same manner. The purpose of the canton was electoral—not executive; the citizens united there to elect their deputies and magistrates; the qualification for voting was a contribution of the amount of three days' labour. The deputies elected by the cantons were intrusted with the nomination of the representatives in the National Assembly, the administrators of the department, those of the district, and the judges in the courts of law.[1]

Division of France into departments. Jan. 9, 1790.

Municipal Establishment. April 1790.

[1] Mig. i. 98, 99. Toul. i. 172. Th. i. 196.

To secure still farther the control of the people, the judges were appointed only for three years; after which, their appointment required to be renewed by the electors; a pernicious state of dependence, even more dangerous in a sovereign multitude than an arbitrary prince, inasmuch as the latter is permanent, and may find his interest or that of his family injured by deeds of injustice, whereas the former is perpetually fluctuating, and neither influenced by a feeling of responsibility, nor any durable interest in the consequences of its iniquity.

[2] Madame de Staël, Rév. Franç. i. 375.

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Municipal regulations.

This decree arranged the rights and limits of the rural districts; another settled the powers and privileges of the inhabitants of towns. The administration of cities was intrusted to a general council, and a municipality, whose number were proportioned to the population of the towns. The municipal officers, or magistrates, were named directly by the people, and were alone authorized to require the assistance of the armed force.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 99, 100. Th. i. 196.

Vast effects of these changes.

The execution of these decrees was the most important step in the history of the Revolution. They were a practical application of the principle recognised in the "Rights of Man," that all sovereignty flows from the people. By this gigantic step, the whole civil force of the kingdom was placed at the disposal of the lower orders. By the nomination of the municipality, they had the government of the towns; by the command of the armed force, the control of the military; by the elections in the departments, the appointment of the deputies to the Assembly, the judges to the courts of law, the bishops to the church, the officers to the national guard; by the elections in the cantons, the nomination of magistrates and local representatives. Every thing thus, either directly, or by the intervention of a double election, flowed from the people; and the qualification for voting was so low, as practically to admit every able bodied man: Forty-eight thousand communes, or municipalities, were thus erected in France, and exercised, concurrently and incessantly, the rights of sovereignty; hardly any appointment was left at the disposal of the crown. After so complete a democratical constitution, it is not surprising, that during all the subsequent changes of the Revolution,[2] the popular party should have acquired so irresistible a

[2] Mig. i. 100. Th. i. 97, 196. Lac. vii. 339.

power; and that, in almost every part of France, the persons in authority should be found supporting the multitude, upon whom they depended for their existence. CHAP. IV. 1790.

This great change, however, was not brought about without exciting the most violent local discontents. It shocked too many feelings, and subverted too many established interests, not to produce a general ferment. Divisions as ancient as the fall of the Roman Empire; parliaments coeval with the first dawn of freedom; prejudices nursed for centuries; barriers of nature incapable of removal; political aversions still in their vigour,—were all disregarded in the great act of democratic despotism. But the protests of the provinces, the resistance of the local parliaments, the clamour of the states, could neither deter nor arrest the National Assembly. A change greater than the Romans attempted in the zenith of their power, which the vigour of Peter, or the ambition of Alexander, never dared to contemplate, was successfully achieved by a popular assembly, a few months after their first establishment. A memorable proof of the force of public opinion, and the irresistible power of that new spring which general information, and the influence of the press, had now, for the first time, brought to bear on public affairs.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 100. Lac. vii. 336, 337.

In parcelling out France into these arithmetical divisions, the Constituent Assembly treated it precisely as a conquered country. Its patriots realized for its free inhabitants, what the Roman historian laments as the last drop of bitterness in the cup of the vanquished.* Acting as conquerors, they imita-

* Non ut olim universae legiones deducebantur cum tribunis et centurionibus, et sui cujusque ordinis militibus, ut consensu et caritate Rempublicam afficerent; sed ignoti inter se diversis manipulis, sine rectore,

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ted the policy of the harshest of that cruel race. "The policy of such barbarous victors," says Mr Burke, "who contemn a subdued people, and insult their inhabitants, ever has been to destroy all vestiges of the ancient country in religion, policy, laws, and manners, to confound all territorial limits, produce a general poverty, crush their nobles, princes, and pontiffs, to lay low every thing which lifted its head above the level, or which could serve to combine or rally, in their distresses, the disbanded people under the standard of old opinion. They have made France free in the manner in which their ancient friends to the rights of mankind freed Greece, Macedon, Gaul, and other nations. If their present project of a Republic should fail, all securities to a moderate freedom fail along with it: they have levelled and crushed together all the orders which they found under the monarchy: all the indirect restraints which mitigate despotism are removed, insomuch that if monarchy should ever again obtain an entire ascendency in France, under *this or any other dynasty*, it will probably be, if not voluntarily tempered at setting out by the wise and virtuous counsels of the prince, the most completely arbitrary power that ever appeared on earth."[1]*

[1] Burke's Consid. Works, v. 328, 333.

At the same time, the elective franchise was fixed at twenty-five years of age, and the contribution of a *marc* of money, or the value of three days' labour. No condition was annexed to the situation of representative, the choice of the people being held to

sine affectibus mutuis, quasi ex alio genere mortalium repente in unum collecti numerus magis quam colonia.—TAC. Ann. xiv. c. 27.

* How surprising a foresight of what the course of time has developed, and developing. When Mr Burke wrote this in 1790, he was far ahead in political intelligence of ninety-nine hundredths of politicians half a century after.

supersede every other qualification. The election of members of the legislature took place by two degrees, the electors in the first instance, in their primary assemblies, choosing the delegates who were to appoint the legislators, and they in their turn selecting the deputies for the Assembly.[1] CHAP. IV 1790.

[1] Th. i. 197.

These two measures, the division of the kingdom into departments, and the prodigious degradation of the elective franchise, rapidly proved fatal to freedom in France. The latter brought up such a body of representatives in the next Assembly as overturned the throne, and induced the Reign of Terror, and the despotism of Napoleon; the former, by destroying the influence of the provinces and concentrating the whole authority of the state in Paris, has left no power existing capable of withstanding the weight, whether in popular, monarchical, or military hands, of the capital. It was not thus in old France;—for sixteen years Paris was occupied by the English, and an English monarch crowned at Rheims; but the provinces resisted and saved the monarchy. The League long held the capital; but Henry IV., at the head of the forces of the provinces, reduced it to submission. But, since the separation of departments, the extinction of provincial courts and assemblies, and the concentration of all the authority of the state in the metropolis, every thing has come to depend on its determinations; the ruling power at the Tuileries has never failed to be obeyed from the Channel to the Pyrenees; and the subjection of France to the mobs of Paris has been greater than that of the Empire to the Prætorian bands.[2]

[2] Vicomte St. Chamans, sur la Révolution de 1830, 79, 82.

The embarrassment of the finances next occupied the attention of the Assembly. All the measures taken for the relief of the public necessities since the convocation of the States-General had proved utterly unavail-

CHAP. IV. ing. The nation in truth was subsisting entirely on bor-
1790. rowed money: the revenue had almost every where
Confiscation of the property of the church. failed, and the public debt had increased in the last three years by the enormous amount of 1,200,000,000 francs, or nearly L.50,000,000 sterling.* Matters had at length reached a crisis; the capitalists, so long the ardent supporters of the Revolution, had become sensible of its tendency, and would not advance a shilling to the public service. The contribution of a fourth part of the revenue of every individual, granted to the eloquence of Mirabeau, had produced but a momentary relief; the confusion of public affairs rendered all ordinary sources of revenue unavailing, and some decisive measure had become indispensable, to fill up the immense deficit which the Revolution had produced. In this emergency, the property of the church was the first fund which presented itself, and it was sacrificed without mercy
Nov. 1789. to the public necessities. Talleyrand, bishop of Autun, proposed that the ecclesiastical property should be devoted to the support of the ministers of religion, and the payment of the public debt. In support of this spoliation, he argued, that "the clergy were not proprietors, but depositaries of their estates; that no individual could maintain any right of property, or inheritance in them; that they were bestowed originally by the munificence of kings or nobles, and might now be resumed by the nation which had succeeded to their rights." To this it was replied by the Abbé Maury, and Siêyes, "that it was an unfounded assertion that the property of the church was at the disposal of the state;

* Total debt in April, 1787, 3,020,000,000 francs or L.120,000,000
In April, 1790, 4,241,000,000 or 170,000,000
Increase, . . . 1,239,000,000 or L.50,000,000
—See CALONNE, 74.

it flowed from the munificence or piety of individuals in former ages, and was destined to a peculiar purpose, totally different from secular concerns; that, if the purposes originally intended could not be carried into effect, it should revert to the heirs of the donors, but certainly could not accrue to the legislature; that this great measure of spoliation was the first step in revolutionary confiscation, and would soon be followed up by the seizure of property of every description; and that, in truth, it was a sacrifice of the provinces, and their estates, to the capitalists of the metropolis who held the public debt, and the vociferous mob who ruled the counsels of the Assembly." But it was all in vain. The property of the church was estimated at several thousand millions of francs; this appeared a fund sufficient to maintain the clergy, endow the hospitals for the poor, extinguish the public debt, and defray the expenses of the civil establishment. To a government overwhelmed with debt, the temptation was irresistible; and, in spite of the eloquence of the Abbé Maury, and the efforts of the clergy, it was decreed, by a great majority, that the ecclesiastical property should be put at the disposal of the nation. The funds thus acquired were enormous; the church lands were nearly one-half of the whole landed property of the kingdom.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 104. Toul. i. 170. Th. i. 193, 194. Chateaubriand, Etud. Hist. iii. 284.

The clergy were declared a burden upon the state, and thenceforward received their incomes from the public treasury. But the Assembly made a wretched provision for the support of religion. The income of the Archbishop of Paris was fixed at L.2000 a-year (50,000 francs); that of the superior bishops at 25,000 francs, or L.1000 a-year; that of the inferior at L.750; that of the smallest at L.500 a-year. The curés of the larger parishes received 2000 francs, or

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L.88 a-year; 1500 francs, or L.60, in the middle-sized; and 1200 francs, or L.48, in the smallest. The incomes of the greater part of the clergy, especially the great beneficiaries, were, by this change, reduced to one-fifth of their former amount.[1]

[1] Lac. viii. 24. Th. i. 195.

The arguments which prevailed with the Assembly were the same as those urged on similar occasions by all who endeavour to appropriate the property of public bodies. It is no doubt plausible to say, that religion, if really true, should be able to maintain itself; that the public will support those who best discharge its duties; and that no preference should be given to the professors of any peculiar species of faith. But experience has demonstrated that these arguments are fallacious, and that religion speedily falls into discredit in a country where its teachers are not only maintained, but amply maintained, at the public expense. The marked, and almost unaccountable irreligion of a large proportion of the French, ever since the Revolution, is a sufficient proof that the support of property, and a certain portion of worldly splendour, is requisite to maintain even the cause of truth.

The reason is apparent: worldly enjoyments are all agreeable in the outset, and only painful in the end. Religious truth is unpalatable at first, and its salutary effects are only experienced after the lapse of time; hence, the first may be safely intrusted to the inclinations or taste of individuals; the last require the support or direction of the state. If individuals are left to choose for themselves, they will select the best architects or workmen; but it does by no means follow that they will pitch upon the best religious guides. The ardent will follow, not the most reasonable, but the most captivating; the self-

ish, or indifferent, the most accommodating; the wicked, none at all. Those who most require reformation will be the last to seek it. An established church, and ecclesiastical property, are required to relieve the teachers of religion from the necessity of bending to the views, or sharing in the fanaticism of the age. Those who live by the support of the public will never be backward in conforming to its inclinations. When children may be allowed to select the medicines they are to take in sickness, or the young the education which is to fit them for the world, the clergy may be left to the support of the public, but not till then.

Leads to the issuing of assignats.

This violent measure led to another, attended by consequences still more disastrous. The necessities of the state required the sale of ecclesiastical property to the amount of 400,000,000 of livres, or L.16,000,000 sterling; to facilitate it, the municipality of Paris, and of the principal cities of the kingdom, became the purchasers in the first instance, trusting to reimbursement by the sale of the property, in smaller portions, to individuals.[1] But an insuperable difficulty arose in finding money sufficient to discharge the price of so extensive a purchase before the secondary sales were effected; to accomplish this, the expedient was adopted of issuing promissory notes of the municipality to the public creditors, which might pass current till the period of their payment arrived. This was immediately done; but when they became due, still no means of discharging them existed; and recourse was had to government bills, which might possess a legal circulation, and pass for money, from one end of the kingdom to the other. Thus arose the system of ASSIGNATS, the source of more public strength, and

[1] Mig. i. 205. Th. i. 233, 234.

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private suffering, than any other measure in the Revolution.

Sale of part of the church property, March 17, 1790.

By a decree of the Assembly, government were authorized to issue assignats to the extent of 170,000,000 francs, or about L.7,000,000 sterling, to be secured on the domains of the crown, and the ecclesiastical property, of the value of 400,000,000 francs. Thus was the public hand for the first time laid on private property, and the dangerous benefit experienced of discharging obligations, without providing funds at the moment for their liquidation; an expedient fostering to industry, and creative of strength in the first instance, but ruinous to both in the end, if not accompanied by prudent management, and based on the provision for ultimate payment.[1] *

[1] Th. i. 234, 235.

Leads to the subdivision of Land.

By this means, the alienation of the ecclesiastical property was rendered irrevocable, and the foundation of a paper circulation laid in the kingdom. The necessities of the state made the continuance and extension of the system in future years unavoidable; and this led to a third consequence, more important in the end than either of the former, viz., the establishment of a vast body of small landholders, whose properties had sprung out of the Revolution, and whose interests were identified with its continuance. The public creditor was not compelled in the first instance to accept land instead of money, but he received assignats, which passed current in the market, and

* It is a remarkable fact, that this irrevocable step was taken by the Assembly in direct opposition to the opinions of the country. Out of thirty-seven addresses from the principal commercial cities of France, only *seven* were in favour of assignats. The clamour of demagogues, the passion for spoliation and financial necessity, had already overturned the whole influence of property, whether landed or commercial.—See CALONNE, 82.

ultimately came into the hands of some prudent individual, who made them the investment of a little capital, and, instead of circulating them as money, presented them for discharge, and received a small fragment of the ecclesiastical estates. The extreme difficulty of finding a secure investment for capital, in those distracted times, and the innumerable bankruptcies of mercantile men which took place during the progress of the Revolution, produced an universal opinion among the labouring classes that the purchase of land was the only safe way of disposing of money; and this feeling, coupled with the excessive depreciation which the assignats afterwards reached, and the great accession to the national domains which the confiscated estates of the nobles produced, occasioned that universal division of landed property, which forms the most striking feature in the modern condition of France.[1]

[1] Baron de Staël, 72. Mig. i. 106. Toul. i. 179.

The clergy, finding the administration of a large portion of their estates transferred to the municipalities, and a paper money created, which was to be paid from their sale, were seized with the most violent apprehensions. As a last resource, they offered to lend the state the 400,000,000 francs, upon being reinvested with their property; but this offer, as tending to throw doubt upon the confiscation of their estates, was immediately rejected. The utmost efforts were immediately made by the church to excite public opinion against the Revolution. The pulpits resounded with declamations against the Assembly; and the sale of the ecclesiastical estates was universally represented as sacrilegious in the highest degree. But their efforts were in vain. Some disturbances broke out in the south of France, and blood was shed in many of the provinces in defence of the priesthood,

Clergy vehemently resist.

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but no general or national movement took place, and after some resistance, they were every where dispossessed of their estates. The irreligious spirit of the age secured this triumph to the enemies of the Christian faith; but no violent or unjustifiable proceeding can take place without ultimately recoiling on the nation which commits it. From this flagrant act of injustice may be dated the strong and unconquerable aversion of the clergy in France to the Revolution, and the marked disregard of religious observances which has since distinguished so large a portion of its inhabitants.[1] From this may be dated that dissolution of private manners which extended with such rapidity during its progress, which has spread the vices of the old noblesse through all the inferior classes of the state, and threatens, in its ultimate effects, to counterbalance all the advantages of the Revolution, by poisoning the fountains of domestic virtue, from which public prosperity must spring. From this, lastly, may be dated the commencement of the fatal system of assignats, which precipitated and rendered irrevocable the march of the Revolution, and ultimately involved in ruin all the classes who participated in this first deed of unpardonable iniquity.

[1] Mig. i. 106, 107. Lac. vii. 290, 291. Th. i. 199, 211, 235.

The only way in which it is possible to avoid these dreadful calamities, which at once dry up all the sources of national prosperity, is to assume it as a fundamental principle, that the estates set apart for the church are private property, not to be encroached or impaired, without the same violence which sets aside all private rights. Without that safeguard the church will inevitably fall a prey to financial embarrassments. Having no bayonets in their hands, like the army; having lost the spiritual thunder which

maintained their authority in the ages of superstition; speaking to the future, not the present, wants of mankind; they will ever be the first to be sacrificed to the financial embarrassments incident to an advanced state of civilisation, if not protected by the shield of an interest common to them with ordinary proprietors. It is to the firm hold which this principle has of the English nation, that Mr Burke ascribes the long duration and extensive usefulness of its national establishment. "The people of England," says he, "never have suffered, and never will suffer, the fixed estate of the church to be converted into a pension, to depend on the Treasury, and to be delayed, withheld, or perhaps extinguished by fiscal difficulties, which may sometimes be pretended for political purposes, and are in fact often brought about by the extravagance, negligence, and rapacity of politicians. They will not turn their independent clergy into ecclesiastical pensioners. They tremble for their liberty from the influence of a clergy dependent on the crown—they tremble for the public tranquillity from the disorders of a factious clergy, if they were made to depend on any other than the crown. For the consolation of the feeble and the instruction of the ignorant, they have identified the estate of the church with the mass of private property of which the state is not the proprietor, either for use or dominion, but only the guardian and regulator—they have ordained that the provision of this establishment should be as stable as the earth on which it stands, and not fluctuate with the oscillations of funds and actions."[1]

[1] Burke's Consid. Works, v. 191, 192.

The interior organization of the church next underwent the revision of the Assembly. The bishoprics were reduced to the same number as the departments;

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New modelling of the church.

the clergy and bishops declared capable of being chosen only by the electors who were intrusted with the nomination of deputies; the chapters suppressed, and the regular orders replaced by parochial clergy. In these reforms, if we except the election of the clergy and bishops by the people, for which they were manifestly disqualified, and which is utterly inconsistent with a national establishment, nothing flagrantly unjust was attempted; the church, purified of its corruptions, and freed from its splendid but invidious appendages, might still have maintained its respectability, had no spoliation of its possessions previously taken place. But the progress of the Revolution, and the efforts of more audacious reformers, soon completed its destruction.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 107, 108. Th. i. 240.

Efforts of the clergy to dissolve the Assembly. May, 1790.

The revolutionary party having now declared open war against the church, its partisans exerted themselves to the utmost to abridge the duration or operations of the Assembly. The moment was favourable, as the period when the powers of the Assembly should expire had arrived; the deputies were only appointed for a year, and that time had now elapsed. The clergy and aristocratical party took advantage of that circumstance to insist that the Assembly should be dissolved and reappointed by the electors; to support that proposal, they urged the sovereignty of the people, so recently proclaimed as the basis of government by the popular leaders. "Without doubt," says Chaplin, "sovereignty resides in the people; but that principle has no application in the present instance. The dissolution of the Assembly, before the work of the constitution is finished, would lead to its destruction; it is now urged by the enemies of freedom, with no other view but to occasion the revival of despotism, of feudal privileges, court

prodigality, and all the countless evils which follow in its train."—"We deceive ourselves," replied the Abbé Maury, "when we speak of perpetuating our own power. When did we become a National Assembly? Has the oath of 20th June absolved us from that which we took to our constituents? The constitution is finished; you have nothing now to do but to declare that the King possesses the executive power; we are sent here for no other purpose but to secure the influence of the people upon the legislature, and prevent the imposition of taxes without their consent. Our duties being now discharged, I strenuously resist every decree which shall trench upon the rights of the electors. The founders of liberty should be the last to invade the rights of others; we undermine our own authority, when we trench upon the privileges of those by whom it was conferred." Loud applauses followed these energetic words; but Mirabeau immediately ascended the tribune. "We are asked," said he, "when our powers began; I reply, from the moment when, finding our place of assembly surrounded by bayonets, we swore rather to perish than abandon our duties towards the nation. Our powers have, since that great event, undergone a total change; whatever we have done has been sanctioned by the unanimous consent of the nation. You all remember the saying of the ancient patriot, who had neglected legal forms to save his country. Summoned by a factious opposition to answer for his infraction of the laws, he replied, 'I swear that I have saved my country.' Gentlemen, I swear that you have saved France." The Assembly, electrified by this appeal, rose by a spontaneous movement, and declared its sitting permanent till the formation of the constitution was completed.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 109, 111. Th. i. 218. Ferriere's Memoirs, i. 257.

CHAP. IV. 1790.

Abolition of titles of honour.

In the fervour of innovation, titles of honour could not long be maintained. Lameth proposed a simple decree, "That the titles of duke, count, marquis, viscount, baron, and chevalier, should be suppressed." The noblesse and the clergy made vain efforts to prevent the sacrifice; it was carried by an overwhelming majority.[1] Thus, in one day fell the ancient and venerable fabric of feudal nobility; an institution, sprung from conquest, and cradled in pride, but productive of great and important consequences on the social body, and the cause of the great distinction between European and Asiatic civilisation. The conquests of the East have seldom produced any lasting institutions, because they have always depended on a single race of warriors, and left behind neither honours nor hereditary possessions to perpetuate the fabric of society. Hence, every thing has been ephemeral in their dynasties; national glory, public prosperity, have in every age been as short-lived as their original founders. In Europe, on the other hand, the establishment of hereditary dignities, and of the right of primogeniture, has perpetuated the influence of the first leaders of the people; and by creating a class whose interests were permanent, has given a degree of durability to human institutions, unknown in any other age or quarter of the globe. Whatever may be said of the vanity of titles, and the unworthy hands into which they frequently descend, it cannot be denied that they have stamped its peculiar character upon European civilisation; that they created the body of nobility who upheld the fabric of society through the stormy periods of anarchy and barbarism, and laid the first foundation of freedom, by forming a class governed by lasting interests, and capable, in every age, of withstanding the efforts of despotic power. Whether the necessity

[1] Lac. vii. 356, 357. Mig. i. 114. June 20, 1790.

of such a class is now superseded by the extension of knowledge and the more equal diffusion of property, and whether a system of tempered liberty can subsist without an intermediate body interposed between the power of the crown and the ambition of the people, are questions which time alone can resolve, but on which the leaders of the French Revolution had unquestionably no materials to form an opinion.

June 10, 1790. Settlement on the Crown.

The Assembly acted with liberality towards the crown. Louis demanded twenty-five millions of francs (L.1,000,000 sterling) annually for his household expenses and civil list, which was instantly granted; and the jointure of the Queen was fixed at four millions of francs, or L.180,000 a-year. A conceding monarch is always, for a brief space, a favourite with a democratic legislature.[1]

[1] Lac. viii. 48. Th. i. 238.

Judicial establishment, May 4, 1790.

The judicial establishment underwent a total change about the same period. The parliaments of the provinces were suppressed; the work of destruction had now become so common, that the annihilation of these ancient courts, coeval with the monarchy, hardly excited any attention. New tribunals were created throughout the whole country on the most democratical basis; the judges were appointed, not by the crown, but the electors; that is, by the whole labouring classes. Even the power of pardon was taken from the sovereign. Trial by jury was universally introduced, and the jurymen taken indiscriminately from all classes of citizens. Reforms of the most salutary description were effected in the criminal courts; trials made public, the accused allowed counsel, and indulged with every facility for their defence. The inhuman punishments which disgraced the ancient monarchy were abolished, and

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the punishment of death limited to a smaller class of delinquencies. The cognizance of charges of high treason was intrusted to a supreme court at Orleans; but it must be added, to the glory of the National Assembly, that during their continuance not one trial took place. A new tribunal, entitled the Court of Cassation, was established at Paris to revise the sentences of inferior tribunals; the utility of that institution was such, that it has been continued through all the subsequent changes of government.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 344, 346. Th. i. 238.

Military organization.

But all these changes, great and important as they were, yielded in importance to the military organization which at this period took place throughout all France. The progress of the Revolution, the overthrow of the invading armies, the subjugation of the European powers, were mainly owing to the military establishments which sprung up during the first fervour of patriotic exertion. The army of France, under the old government, partook of the aristocratic spirit of the age; the higher grades of military rank were exclusively reserved for the court nobility, and even ordinary commissions bestowed only on those whose birth or connexions united them to the favoured class of landed proprietors. The consequences of such an exclusive system, in an age of advancing civilisation, might easily have been anticipated; the privates and non-commissioned officers had no common interest with their superiors, and, like the parochial clergy, felt their own inclinations coincide with those of the Tiers Etat. Hence the rapid and decisive defection of the whole army, the moment that they were brought into collision with the Revolution, and exposed to the contagion of popular enthusiasm.[2] Injudicious changes in the regulation of the household troops had recently introduced extensive dis-

[2] Toul. i. 124, 126, 127.

satisfaction even amongst that favoured body, and occasioned the revolt of the Guards, which was the immediate cause of the fall of the royal authority. CHAP. IV. 1790.

The difficulties experienced by the military in all contests with the populace at this time were so great, that they practically amounted to an entire suspension of the authority of government. The duties of a municipal officer, or of the commander of a fortress, were more appalling than those arising from the most formidable force of regular enemies. In most places, the troops, seized with the same mutinous spirit as the nation, refused to act against the insurgents, or openly ranged themselves on their side. A handful of mutineers, a despicable rabble, were thus sufficient to make the governor of a citadel tremble; every act of vigour, even in self-defence, came to be considered as a capital crime; and the clamours of the populace were regarded with more alarm than the thunder of the enemy's artillery. Mirabeau became fully sensible, when it was too late, of the ruinous consequences of such a distracted state of things, and proposed to remedy it by the proclamation of martial law; but the Assembly, terrified of offending the nation, did not venture to adopt so vigorous a step.[1]*

[1] Dumont, 202.

* M. De La Tour Dupin, Minister of War, on the 4th June, 1790, gave the following account, in a Report to the Assembly, of the disorders of the army—"His Majesty has this day sent me to apprize you of the multiplied disorders of which every day he receives the most distressing intelligence. The army is threatened with ultra anarchy. Entire regiments have dared to violate at once the respect due to the laws, to the order established by your decrees, and to the oaths which they have taken with the most awful solemnity. Whilst you are indefatigable in moulding the empire into one coherent and consistent body, the administration of the army exhibits nothing but disturbance and confusion. The bonds of discipline are relaxed or broken, the most unheard of pretensions avowed without disguise, the ordinances without force, the chiefs without authority; the military chest and the colours carried off; the

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General establishment of National Guards.

Shortly after the taking of the Bastile, a new oath was tendered to the soldiers, which bound them never to employ their arms against their fellow-citizens, but on the requisition of the civil authorities. This circumstance, immaterial in itself, became important in its consequences, by accustoming the military to other duties, and the protection of other interests, than those of the sovereign. At the same period the national guards were organized, in imitation of Paris, over the whole kingdom; the middling classes, every where attached to the Revolution, because it promised to relieve the disabilities under which they laboured, formed the strength of its battalions; and in a few months 300,000 men, enrolled and disciplined in the provinces, were ready to support the popular cause. The influence of this immense body of armed men, great in itself, was increased by the democratic con-

authority of the King himself proudly defied; the officers despised, degraded, threatened, driven away, or prisoners in the midst of their corps, dragging on a precarious life in the bosom of disgust and humiliation. To fill up the measures of all these horrors, the commandants of places have had their throats cut, under the eyes and almost in the arms of their own soldiers!

"These evils are great, but they are neither the only nor the worst produced by such military insurrections. Sooner or later they menace the nation itself. The nature of things requires that the army should never act but as an instrument. The moment that, erecting itself into a deliberative body, it shall act according to its own resolutions, the government, be it what it may, will immediately degenerate into a military despotism; a species of monster which has always ended by devouring those who have produced it."—See Report quoted by BURKE, *Cons. Works*, v. 377.

So far, however, was the King from listening to this sound advice; that, under the influence of his superstitious dread of occasioning the shedding of blood, he sent round circulars to all the regiments of the army, with orders that the soldiers should join several clubs and confederations in the different municipalities, and mix with them in their feasts and civil entertainments. "Sa Majesté a pensé qu'il convenoit que chaque regiment pret part à ces fêtes civiques, pour multiplier les rapports, et reserrer les liens entre les citoyens et les troupes."—*Ibid.* v. 382.

stitution under which it was constructed. Formed in a moment of revolution, and during the abeyance of the royal authority, it received no regular organization from any superior power; the privates elected their own officers, and learned the rudiments of discipline from instructors of their own selection; and these, chosen during a period of extraordinary excitation, were of course the most vehement supporters of the power of the people. Hence the marked and steady adherence of this influential body, through all the changes of the Revolution, to the popular side; and hence the facility with which regular armies were subsequently formed on the same democratic model, on the first call of national danger.[1] CHAP. IV. 1790. [1] Toul. i. 88, 126, 127.

The national guard of Paris, 30,000 strong, under the command of La Fayette, was capable of being increased, by beat of drum, to double the number, all in the highest state of discipline and equipment. But, as usually happens, where officers owe their appointment to the privates, his authority disappeared when his commands ran counter to the wishes of his inferiors.[2] On one occasion he resigned the command, and entered an evening party in the dress of the privates. "What, general!" exclaimed the guests; "we thought you were commander of the national guard."—"Oh!" said he; "I was tired of obeying, and therefore entered the ranks of the privates." * [2] Toul. i. 127.

A more formidable force consisted in a multitude of artisans and manufacturers in all the great towns, armed with pikes, and trained to a certain degree of And of armed Pikemen.

* The author received this anecdote from his late illustrious and revered friend Professor Dugald Stewart, who was present on the occasion.

CHAP. IV. 1790. military discipline. These tumultuous bands, raised in moments of alarm, were always ready for insurrection, and anxious to share in the plunder of the opulent classes. Having nothing to lose themselves, they supported every measure of spoliation and cruelty. The worst of the popular leaders found in them a never-failing support, when the more measured fervour of the national guard was beginning to decline. Their numbers in Paris alone amounted to above 50,000; and their power, always great, received an undue preponderance from the disastrous gift of two pieces of cannon to each of the forty-eight sections, shortly after the capture of the Bastile. These guns were worked by the ablest and most determined of the populace; the higher ranks all shunned that service from the fatigue with which it was attended; it fell into the hands of the most ardent of the lower, and, from their terrible energy, these cannoniers soon acquired a dreadful celebrity in all the bloodiest tragedies of the Revolution.[1]

[1] Lac. vii. 357.

Dreadful depreciation of Assignats.

June 17, 1790.

The agitation of the public mind was shortly increased by the convulsions which the paper circulation of the country underwent, and the multitudes whom its progressive depreciation reduced to a state of beggary. Government having once experienced the relief from immediate pressure, which paper credit never fails in the first instance to afford, speedily returned to the expedient; and fresh issues of assignats, secured upon the church property, appeared upon every successive crisis of finance.[2] Eight hundred millions of fresh assignats were issued, notwithstanding the warning voice of Talleyrand,* at the

[2] Toul. i. 204. Th. i. 256, 257.

* M. Talleyrand clearly predicted the fatal consequences which would result from this continued issue of assignats to meet the wants of the treasury. "You ask," said he, "why should that paper money be always below the value of the metallic currency? It is because distrust will always

instigation of Mirabeau, who clearly perceived what a body of revolutionary interests and proprietors it would soon create.

These documents at first bore interest at the rate of four per cent; but this was soon discontinued; notwithstanding which, they for some time maintained their value on a par with the metallic currency. By degrees, however, the increasing issue of paper produced its usual effects on public credit; the value of money fell, while that of every other article rose in a high proportion; and at length the excessive inundation of fictitious currency spread a panic through the public mind, and its value rapidly sunk to a mere nominal sum. Eight or nine per cent was all that could be got, after some years, for these dangerous documents; and in many cases they would hardly pass for one-fifteenth of their legal value. So prodigious a change in the state of the circulating medium, occasioned an extraordinary fluctuation in the fortunes of individuals, and augmented to an incredible degree the number of those who were ruined by the public convulsions. But it extended in a proportional measure its ramifications through society, by swelling the number of the holders of national property, and enlisting a large and influential class, by the strong bond of interest, on the side of the Revolution.[1]

[1] Th. i. 204. Mig. i. 106. Toul. i. 205. Lac. viii. 56.

exist as to the proportion between its amount and the national domains on which it is secured; because for long their sales will be uncertain; because it is difficult to conceive when two thousand millions, (L.800,000,000,) the value of these domains, will be extinguished; because silver issuing at par with paper, both will become objects of merchandise; and the more plentiful any merchandise becomes, the more it must decline in price. From this must necessarily result an inextricable confusion; the purchase of land for a nominal value; the discharge of debts for illusory payment; and, in a word, an universal change of property, by a system of spoliation so secret, that no one can perceive from whence the stroke that ruins him has come."[1]

[1] Th. i. 383, 385. Pièces Just.

CHAP. IV. 1790. Fête on the 14th July.

The 14th July, the anniversary of the taking of the Bastile, approached, and the patriots resolved to signalize it by a fête worthy of the birth of freedom, in the greatest of the European states. A confederation of the whole kingdom in the Champ de Mars was resolved on; and there the King, the deputies of the eighty-four departments, the Assembly, and the National Guard, were to take the oath to the constitution. Every exertion was made to render the ceremony imposing. For several weeks before, almost the whole labouring population of Paris was employed in constructing benches in the form of a theatre, for the innumerable spectators who were expected, while the municipality, the national guard, and the deputies of the departments, vied with each other in their endeavours to signalize their appearance on the stage by the utmost possible magnificence. The presence of the Monarch, of the National Assembly, of an hundred thousand armed men, and above four hundred thousand spectators, it was justly supposed, would impress the imagination of a people less passionately devoted than the French to theatrical effect.[1]

[1] Th. i. 245. Mig. i. 114, 115. Lac. vii. 359.

Early in the morning of the 14th, all Paris was in motion. Four hundred thousand persons repaired with joyful steps to the Champ de Mars, and seated themselves, amidst songs of congratulation, upon the seats which surrounded the plain. At seven o'clock the procession advanced. The electors, the representatives of the municipality, the presidents of the districts, the national guards, the deputies of the army and of the departments, moved on in order to the sound of military music, from the site of the Bastile, with banners floating, bearing patriotic inscriptions, and arrayed in varied and gorgeous habiliments. The splendid throng crossed the Seine by a bridge of

boats opposite the Ecole Militaire, and entered the amphitheatre under a triumphal arch. They were there met by the King and the National Assembly at the foot of a great altar, erected after the manner of the ancients, in the middle of the plain. Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, and four hundred priests, dressed in tricolor robes, celebrated high mass in presence of the assembled multitude; after which, La Fayette, as commander in chief of the national guards of France, mounted on a superb white charger, advanced and took the oath in the following terms:—"We swear to be faithful to the nation, to the law, and to the King; to maintain with all our might the constitution decreed by the National Assembly, and accepted by the King; and to remain united to all the French by the indissoluble bonds of fraternity." Immediately after, the President of the National Assembly and the King took the oath, and the Queen, lifting the Dauphin in her arms, pledged herself for his adherence to the same sentiments. Discharges of artillery, the rolling of drums, the shouts of the multitude, and the clashing of arms, rent the skies at the auspicious event, which seemed to reunite the monarch and his subjects by the bonds of affection. In the evening, illuminations and festivities prevailed in Paris; and the King, in a concealed calèche, enjoyed the general expression of happiness. A ball took place upon the site of the Bastile; over the gate was this inscription.—"Ici on danse."—"They danced in effect," says a contemporary writer, "with joy and security, on the same spot where formerly fell so many tears—where courage, genius, and innocence have so often wept—where so often were stifled the cries of despair."[1]

[1] Fer. Mem. i. 18, 23. Mig. i. 117. Luc. vii. 367. Th. i. 246, 249.

These festivities interrupted for a short period

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only the animosity of the factions at each other. The Duke of Orleans, who had recently returned from his exile in London, was accused, along with Mirabeau, of having conspired to produce the revolt of the 5th October. Never was accusation more ill-timed and unfortunate. At that very moment, Mirabeau, disgusted at the revolutionary proceedings of the Assembly, was secretly lending the aid of his great talents to support the cause of the throne, a leaning to which he had been inclined ever since the beginning of the year. He had long foreseen the approaching ruin of the state, and had resolved to do his utmost to stem the torrent of those passions he had had so large a share in creating. The Abbé Maury, who took the lead in the impeachment, was obliged to confess that the evidence did not warrant any criminal proceedings against that illustrious man; and the fact of his having been accused, restored all his popularity, which was beginning to decline. Never did he sway the Assembly with more absolute power than when he ascended the tribune to make his defence. The Assembly quashed the accusation, both against Mirabeau and the Duke of Orleans; but the latter never afterwards regained his reputation, and from that period his influence in the Revolution was at an end.[1]

Accusation of Duke of Orleans and Mirabeau.

[1] Lac. viii. 83, 84. Mig. i. 118. Th. i. 187, 250, 252.

Shortly after, M. Neckar retired from the ministry. Ill health was assigned as the motive for a step which was really taken from a sense of declining influence and lost popularity. His own words had proved prophetic; the day of his triumphant entry into Paris had been the first of his decline. He had lived to see the folly of his favourite opinion, that reason, if forcibly stated and blended with sentiment, would in the end sway the most vehement popular bodies.

Retirement of Neckar, Sept. 4.

His resignation, couched in eloquent and touching language, was received in the Assembly without regret; and he set out for Switzerland, unattended and a fugitive, over the route which he had so lately traversed in triumph. He was arrested at Arcis sur Aube, and narrowly escaped the fate from which he had so generously saved his enemy, M. de Besenval. Permission to continue his journey was coldly conceded by the Legislature, which owed its existence and popular constitution to his exertions;[1]—a memorable instance of the instability of popular applause, but such as must always be looked for in Revolutions. Its early promoters are uniformly neglected, when other and more audacious leaders have succeeded; all classes aim at supremacy; its course is always onward; none who have risen by its impulse can long maintain their ascendency, because, by remaining at the head of affairs, they check the elevation of inferior ambition.

[1] Mig. i. 118. Lac. vii. 85. Th. i. 257, 258.

The retreat of Neckar produced a total change in the Ministry. Duport du Tertre, Duportail, Fleureiu, Lambert, and De Lessart, succeeded to the several offices of government. Two were destined to perish on the scaffold; one by the sword of revolutionary assassins. The period was fast approaching when eminence in public life was a sure passport to a violent death.[2]

Change of Ministry. Sept. 5.

[2] Lac. viii. 92. Th. i. 259.

The state of the army was soon such as to require the immediate attention of the Assembly. The recent military code was eminently favourable to the inferior officers; the ancient distinctions and privileges of rank were abolished, and seniority made the sole title to promotion. In proportion as this change was beneficial to the private soldiers, it was obnoxious to their superiors, who found their advancement obstructed by a multitude of competitors from the

CHAP. IV. 1790. Revolt at Metz and Nancy. Aug. 31.

inferior ranks, from whom they formerly experienced no sort of hinderance. The result was, a general jealousy between the privates and their officers: Where the former preponderated, Jacobin clubs, in imitation of those in the metropolis, were formed, and discipline, regulations, and accoutrements, subjected to the discussion of these self-constituted legislators; where the latter, dissatisfaction with the established government generally prevailed. Nowhere had the anarchy risen to a higher pitch than in the garrison of Nancy. It was composed of three regiments, one of which was Swiss, the others French; the proportion of officers in these regiments was much greater than usual in other corps, and they were drawn from the class most hostile to the Revolution. After a long series of disputes between them and the privates, the latter broke out into open revolt, and put their officers under arrest in their own barracks. The Assembly, perceiving the extreme danger of military insubordination in the unsettled state of the public mind, took the most energetic measures to put down the revolt. Mirabeau exerted his powerful voice on the side of order; and BOUILLE, commander of Metz, received orders to march with the military force under his command against the insurgents. Between the regular troops and the national guard he assembled 3000 men, with which, after a sharp encounter, he vanquished the mutineers. This prompt and decisive success calmed the fears of the National Assembly, which this revolt had thrown into the most violent alarm; but it excited new fears and jealousies at Paris, from the additional influence which it gave to an already dreaded character.[1]

[1] Toul. i. 237, 239, 242. Mig. i. 119, 120. Th. i. 254, 255.

Connected with the aristocratic class by birth, and attached to the throne by principle and affection, M.

de Bouillé was yet no enemy to those moderate reforms which all intelligent men felt to be indispensable in the state and army. He was an enemy to the Revolution, not such as it was, but such as it had become. Firm, intrepid, and sagacious, he was better calculated than any other individual to stem the torrent of disaster; but the times were such, that not even the energy of Napoleon could have withstood its fury. Within the sphere of his own command, he maintained inviolate the royal authority; by separating his soldiers from the citizens, he preserved them from the contagion of revolutionary principles; while, at the same time, by the natural ascendant of a great character, he retained their affections. For long he declined the new military oath, to be faithful "to the nation, to the law, and to the King;" at length, moved by the entreaties of Louis, he agreed to take it, in the hopes of preventing the latter part of the obligation from being entirely forgotten in the first.[1]

Character of M. de Bouillé.

[1] Toul. i. 119.

The Assembly shortly after decreed, that the same oath should be tendered to the ecclesiastics. This rendered irreparable the breach between the church and the Revolution. A great proportion of the churchmen of every rank in France refused this oath, which bound them "to be faithful to the nation, to the law, and to the King, and to maintain with all their power the constitution decreed by the National Assembly, and accepted by the people." It was unreasonable to suppose that the ecclesiastics of France could be sincerely attached to a legislature which had deprived them of all their property, and unjust to hold them as contumacious, because they refused to swear fidelity to its constitution. Nevertheless, the Assembly, irritated by their opposition,

New ecclesiastical oath. Its disastrous effects. Nov. 27, 1790.

CHAP. IV. 1791.

decreed that every churchman who refused the oath should be instantly deprived of his benefice. Eight days only were allowed to the resident, and two months to the absent clergy, to testify their adherence.[1] A large part of the bishops and curés in the Assembly refused the oath, and their example was followed by the great majority of the clergy throughout France,—a memorable example of conscientious discharge of duty, which might have opened the eyes of the Assembly to the impolicy as well as injustice of carrying on any farther persecution against this important class. Such, however, was the spirit of the times, that their refusal was universally ascribed to the most factious motives, and immediately followed by the confiscation of their livings. The dispossessed clergy, suddenly reduced by this cruel measure to destitution, filled the kingdom with their complaints, and excited in those districts, where their influence still remained, the strongest commiseration at their fate. The people beheld with indignation new churchmen filling the vacant pulpits, and administering, with unconsecrated hands, the holiest offices of religion. The dispossessed clergy still lingered in their dioceses or livings, subsisting on the charity of their former flocks, and denouncing as impious the ordinances and proceedings of the intrusive ministers. Inflamed with resentment at their proceedings, the Assembly at length fixed a day for the adherence of all the clergy in France, and upon its expiry the decree of forfeiture was universally and rigorously enforced. Mirabeau in vain raised his voice against this tyrannical step; the dictates of justice, the feelings of humanity, were alike drowned in the clamours of the populace.[2]

[1] Toul. i. 258. Mig. i. 121. Th. i. 266.

Jan. 4, 1791.

[2] Toul. i. 259, 261. Mig. i. 122.

From these measures may be traced the violent animosity of the clergy at the Revolution, and to this cause ascribed the irreligious spirit which has in so remarkable a manner characterised its progress. The clergy being the first class who suffered under the violence of popular spoliation, were the first to raise their voice against its proceedings, and to rouse a portion of the nation to resist its progress; hence the contending parties began to mingle religious rancour with civil dissension. In the cities, in the departments, the people were divided between the refractory and the revolutionary clergy; the faithful deemed none of the exercises of religion duly performed, but by the dispossessed ministers; the democrats looked upon these nonjuring ecclesiastics as fanatics, alike inaccessible to reason, and dangerous to society. The clergy who refused the oath, composed the most respectable part of this body, as might have been expected from men who relinquished rank and fortune for the sake of conscience. Those who accepted it were in part demagogues, whose principles readily gave place to their ambition. The former influenced a large portion of the community, especially in the remote and rural districts; the latter were followed by the most influential part of the inhabitants, the young, the active, the ambitious. In this way the Revolution split the kingdom into two parties, who have never ceased to be strongly exasperated against each other; the one who adhered to the religious observances of their fathers, the other who opposed them. The latter have proved victorious in the strife, and the consequence has been, that irreligion has since prevailed in France to an extent unparalleled in any Christian state.[1]

[1] Toul. i. 262. Mig. i. 122.

CHAP. IV. 1791. This iniquitous measure was speedily followed by another, equally alluring to appearance, and attended in the end by consequences to public freedom fully as disastrous,—the abolition of the right of primogeniture, and establishment of the right of equal succession to landed property to the nearest of kin, whether in the descending, ascending, or collateral line, without any regard either to the distinction of the sexes, or of the full and the half blood. This prodigious change, which laid the axe to the root of the aristocracy, and indeed of the whole class of considerable landed proprietors in the kingdom, by providing for the division of their estates on their decease among all their relations in an equal degree of consanguinity, was at the moment so agreeable to the levelling spirit of the times, that it met with very little opposition, and proved so acceptable to the revolutionary party throughout the kingdom, that it survived all the other changes of the government, and remains the common law of inheritance in France at this hour. Napoleon was compelled to adopt it under a slight modification, into the code which bears his name, and though fully aware of its dangerous tendency in extinguishing the aristocratic class, who were the only permanent supporters of the throne, or the cause of order, he never felt himself strong enough to oppose its repeal. Other changes introduced by the French Revolution have produced consequences more immediately disastrous, none so ultimately fatal to the cause of freedom. It provided for the slow but certain extinction of that grand and characteristic feature of European civilisation, an hereditary and independent body of landed proprietors; removed the barrier which alone has been proved by experience to be permanently adequate to

March 18, 1791.

In 1802.

resist the ambition of the commons, or the tyranny of the crown, and left the nation no elements but the burghers in the towns, and the poor and helpless peasants in the country, to resist the encroachments of the central power in the capital, armed by the shortsighted ambition of the popular party, with almost all the powers in the state.[1]

[1] Ann. Reg. xxxiii. 150.

Clubs of Paris. Jacobins and Monarchique.

About the same period, the Clubs of Paris began to assume a formidable character, and, from the influence which they subsequently exercised in the Revolution, merit particular notice. They consisted merely of voluntary associations of individuals who met to discuss public affairs; but from the number and talent of their members, soon became of great importance. The most powerful of these was the famous Club of the JACOBINS, originally an assembly of deputies from Britanny, who met for the discussion of philosophical questions, but who, after the translation of the Assembly to Paris, extended their ramifications through the provinces, and by the admission of every citizen, indiscriminately, became the great focus of revolutionary principles. The moderate party, to counterbalance their influence, established a new club, entitled the Club of 1789, at the head of which were Siêyes, Chapelier, La Fayette, and La Rochefoucault. The latter at first prevailed in the Assembly; the former was the favourite of the people.[2] But, as the tendency of all public convulsions is to run into extremes, from the incessant efforts of the lower classes to dispossess their superiors, the moderate club soon fell into obscurity, while the Jacobins went on, increasing in number and energy, until at length they overturned the government, and sent forth the sanguinary despots who established the Reign of Terror.

[2] Mig. i. 123.

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The Royalists in vain endeavoured to establish clubs as a counterpoise to these assemblies. Their influence was too inconsiderable; their numbers too small to keep alive the flame; the leaders of their party had gone into exile; those who remained, laboured under the depression of a declining cause. A club, entitled Le Monarchique, had some success at its first opening; but its numbers gradually fell off, and it at length was closed by the municipal authority, to put an end to the seditious assemblages which it occasioned among the people.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 123.

The increasing emigration of the noblesse augmented the distrust and suspicions of the people. The departure of the Princesses Adelaide and Victoria, aunts of the King, gave rise to a rumour, that the whole royal family were about to depart; and to such a height did the public anxiety arise, that the mob forcibly prevented a visit to St Cloud, which the King was desirous to make. La Fayette, who wished to prove the personal liberty of the Monarch, endeavoured in vain to prevail on his guards to allow him to depart. Disgusted at his want of success with the troops, he resigned the command of the national guard, and was only prevailed on to resume it by the earnest entreaties of the whole regiments of Paris. The Assembly, alarmed at the possibility of the King's escaping, passed a decree, declaring that the person of the King was inviolable; that the constitutional regent should be the nearest male heir of the crown; and that the flight of the monarch should be equivalent to his dethronement.[2]

[2] Mig. i. 124, 125. April 18, 1791.

The emigration, however, continued with unabated violence. The heads of the noblest families in France repaired to Coblentz, where a large body of emi-

grants were assembled; no disguise was attempted of their destination; several young noblemen on leaving the opera, ordered their coachmen to drive to that city. The fever of departure became so general, that the roads leading to the Rhine were crowded with elegant equipages, conveying away the remains of the nobility. They did not, as in the time of the crusades, sell their estates, but abandoned them to the first occupant, trusting soon to regain them by the sword. Vain hope! The Assembly confiscated their properties; the republican armies vanquished their battalions; and the nobility of France for ever lost their inheritance. Vain, frivolous, and self-sufficient, the aristocracy at Coblentz had not laid aside their character when they left their country; their vices were at least as conspicuous in exile as their misfortunes, and declining to avail themselves of the only aid which could have retrieved their fortunes, they refused all offers of assistance from the middling ranks of society. The Prince of Condé, at the head of a brave band, stationed himself on the Upper Rhine, strangers to the intrigues that were going on, but determined to regain their rights by the sword.[1]*

Continued emigration.

[1] Th. i. 270, 271. Lac. viii. 117.

* The best defence of the emigrants that ever has been made, is that by Chateaubriand in his unpublished Memoirs.—"A worthy foreigner by his fireside, in a tranquil state, sure of rising in the morning as safe as he went to bed in the evening, in secure possession of his fortune, with his door well barred, surrounded by friends within and without, will find it no difficult matter to prove, while he drinks a good glass of wine, that the French emigrants were in the wrong, and that an upright citizen should in no extremity desert his country.—It is not surprising that he arrives at such a conclusion. He is at ease, no one thinks of persecuting him; he is in no danger of being insulted, murdered, or burnt in his house, because his ancestor was noble; his conclusions are easily formed. It belongs only to misfortune to judge of misfortune; the hardened heart of prosperity cannot enter into the delicate feelings of

CHAP. IV. 1791. This general defection, which was magnified in the revolutionary journals, produced so great an impression, that the two royal princesses were arrested on their journey towards Switzerland, and the Assembly felt the utmost difficulty at allowing them to proceed. Mirabeau, who was now secretly inclined to the royal party, raised his powerful voice to facilitate their departure. "An imperious law," exclaimed the

adversity. If we consider calmly what the emigrants have suffered in France, where is the man now at his ease, who can lay his hand on his heart and say, 'I would not have acted as they did?' The persecution commenced every where at the same time in all its parts, and it is a mistake to suppose, that difference of political opinion alone was its cause. Were you the warmest democrat, the most burning patriot, it was enough that you bore an historic name, to subject you to the risk of being prosecuted, burned or hanged, as is proved by the example of Lameth and many others, whose properties were laid waste, notwithstanding their ardour in defence of the people in the Constituent Assembly."—See CHATEAUBRIAND'S *Memoirs—Fragments*, p. 78.

Admitting the caustic eloquence of these remarks, the British historian cannot allow their justice. The example of the nobility of his own country, in the disastrous days which succeeded the passing of the Reform Bill, has furnished him with a decisive refutation of them. The flames of Bristol and Nottingham proved that danger had reached their dwellings as well as those of the French noblesse; and if they had in consequence deserted their country and leagued with the stranger, it is hardly doubtful that similar excesses would have laid waste the whole fair realm of England. They did not do so; they remained at home, braving every danger, enduring every insult, and who can over-estimate the influence of such moral courage in mitigating the evils which then so evidently threatened their country? The massacres in France did not begin till after the 10th August, 1792; and yet the whole nobility had emigrated, and were assembled in menacing crowds at Coblentz before the end of 1791. Previous to this, there had, indeed, been a vast catalogue of rural disorders, immediately consequent on the abandonment of the feudal rights in August, 1789, but these excesses had been of short duration, and the two last years of the Constituent Assembly had been comparatively calm and tranquil. Their emigration was excusable in the autumn of 1789; it was no longer so in the autumn of 1791; and the frightful exasperation of parties which followed, may in a great measure be traced to that culpable desertion of their first patriotic duties, and unhappy union with foreign armies for the invasion of their country.

jacobins, "forbids their departure."—"What law?" said Mirabeau.—"The safety of the people!" replied Lameth.—"The safety of the people!" rejoined Mirabeau, "as if two princesses advanced in years, tormented by the fears of their conscience, could compromise it by their absence or their opposition! The safety of the people! I expected to have heard these words invoked for serious dangers; when you act as tyrants in the name of freedom, who will hereafter trust your assurance?"—"Europe will be surprised to learn," said the Baron de Menou, "that the Assembly has been occupied, during two hours, with the journey of two old ladies, who prefer hearing the mass at Rome to Paris." The ridicule of the thing at length prevailed over the fears of the democrats, and the two princesses were allowed to continue their journey without farther interruption.[1] CHAP. IV. 1791. 1 Lac. viii. 122. Th. i. 272.

These discussions were but the prelude to the great question of the law against the emigrants, which now occupied the attention, not only of the Assembly, but of all the clubs in France. The project of the law introduced by Chapelier, with the humane design of preventing its adoption, was marked by undisguised severity. It authorized a committee of three persons to pronounce upon refractory emigrants the sentence of outlawry and confiscation. A general horror pervaded the Assembly at the cruel proposal, and Mirabeau, taking a skilful advantage of the first impression, succeeded in preventing its adoption. Never was his eloquence more powerful, or his influence more strongly displayed, than on that occasion, the last on which he ever addressed that body. "The sensation which the projet of this law has Discussions concerning emigrants, March, 1791.

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excited," said he, "proves that it is worthy of a place in the code of Draco, and should never be received into the decrees of the National Assembly of France. It is high time you should be undeceived; if you or your successors should ever give way to the violent counsels by which you are now beset, the law which you now spurn would be regarded as an act of clemency. In the bloody pages of your statute-book, the word DEATH would every where be found; your mouths would never cease to pronounce that terrible word; your statutes, while they spread dismay within the kingdom, would chase to foreign shores all who gave lustre to the name of France; and your execrable enactments would find subjects for execution only among the poor, the aged, and the unfortunate. For my own part, far from subscribing to such atrocious measures, I should conceive myself absolved from every oath of fidelity to those who could carry their infamy so far as to name such a dictatorial commission. Your murmurs are unavailing; to please you is my happiness, to warn you, my duty; the popularity which I desire is not a feeble twig, fanned by the breath of momentary favour; it is an oak, whose roots are spread in the soil, that is to say, fixed on the immutable basis of justice and liberty. I understand the vexation of those, who now so ardent, or rather so perfidious, in their love of freedom, would be puzzled to tell when it arose in their bosoms." These last words excited a violent murmur among the Jacobins. "Silence those thirty voices!" said Mirabeau in a voice of thunder, and the hall was instantly silent.[1]

[1] Lac. viii. 122, 126. Mig. i. 125. Th. i. 277, 279.

With such prophetic truth did this great man foresee the result of the violent counsels, and angry passions, which were now beginning to tinge the

career of the Revolution. He plainly perceived that his popularity was on the wane, not because his eloquence was less powerful, his arguments less cogent, his energy less commanding, than when he reigned the lord of the ascendant, but because he no longer headed the popular movement, and strove to master the passions he had excited among the people. Already the cry had been heard in the streets, "Grande trahison du Comte Mirabeau," and the populace followed the career of less able, but more reckless leaders. Disgusted with the fickleness of the multitude, and foreseeing the sanguinary excesses to which they were fast approaching, he had for long made secret advances to the constitutional party, and entered into correspondence with the King, for the purpose of restraining the farther progress of the Revolution. He received for a short time a pension of 20,000 francs, or L.800 a-month, first from the Count D'Artois, and afterwards from the King; but it was not continued till the time of his death, from finding that he was not so pliant as the court party expected. His style of life suddenly changed; magnificent entertainments succeeded each other in endless profusion, and his house resembled rather the hotel of a powerful minister, than that of the leader of a fierce democracy.[1] Yet mere venality was not the motive for this great change; he allied himself to the court, partly because he saw it was the only way to stop the progress of the Revolution; he took their pensions, because he regarded himself as their minister to govern the Assembly; and he would have rejected with disdain any proposition to undertake what was unworthy of his character. His design was to support the throne, and consolidate the constitution, by putting a stop to the encroachments of the people.

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Mirabeau joins the throne.

[1] Dumont, 230, 229. Lac. viii. 128. Mig. i. 126.

CHAP. IV. 1791. With this view, he proposed to establish, in reality, and not in name, the royal authority, and dissolve the Assembly; re-assemble a new one, restore the nobility, and form a constitution as nearly as possible on the English model;[1] a wise and generous object, entertained at different times by all the best friends of freedom in France, but which none were able to accomplish, from the flight of the great and powerful body by whom it should have been supported.

[1] Dum. 285, 312, 313. Bouillé, 247.

Mirabeau's plan for saving the throne.

The plan of Mirabeau was to facilitate the escape of the King from Paris to Compiegne, or Fontainbleau; that he should there throw himself under the guidance of the able and intrepid M. de Bouillé, assemble a royal army, call to his support the remaining friends of order, and openly employ force to stem the torrent. He pledged himself for the immediate support of thirty departments, and the ultimate adhesion of thirty-six more. Between the contending parties he flattered himself he should be able to act as mediator, and restore the monarchy to the consideration it had lost, by founding it on the basis of constitutional freedom. "I would not wish," said he, in a letter to the King, "to be always employed in the vast work of destruction;" and, in truth, his ambition was now to repair the havoc which he himself had made in the social system. He was strongly impressed with the idea, which was in all probability well founded, that if the King could be brought to put himself at the head of the constitutional party, and resist the farther progress of democracy, the country might yet be saved. "You know not," said he, "to what a degree France is still attached to the King, and that its ideas are still essentially monarchical. The moment the King recovers his freedom, the Assembly will be reduced to nothing: it is a

colossus with the aid of his name; without it, it would be a mountain of sand. There will be some movements at the Palais Royal, and that will be all. Should La Fayette attempt to play the part of Washington, at the head of the national guard, he will speedily, and deservedly, perish." He relied upon the influence of the clergy, who were now openly committed against the Revolution with the rural population, and on the energy and intrepidity of the Queen, as sufficient to counterbalance all the consequences of the vacillation of the King. But, in the midst of these magnificent designs, he was cut short by death. A constitution naturally strong, sunk under the accumulated pressure of ambition, excitation, and excessive indulgence.[1]

[1] Lac. viii. 127, 128. Staël, i. 405, 406. Th. i. 280. Dum. 207 210, 211, 257.

His death, albeit that of a sceptic, had something in it sublime. He was no stranger to his approaching dissolution; but, far from being intimidated by the prospect, he gloried in the name he was to leave. Hearing the cannon discharge upon some public event, he exclaimed, "I already hear the funeral obsequies of Achilles: after my death, the factions will tear to shreds the remnants of the monarchy." His sufferings were severe at the close of his illness; at one period, when the power of speech was gone, he wrote on a slip of paper the words of Hamlet, "To die is to sleep."—"When a sick man is given over, and he suffers frightful pains, can a friendly physician refuse to give him opium?" A few hours before his death, the commencement of mortification relieved his sufferings. "Remove from the bed," said he, "all that sad apparatus. Instead of these useless precautions, surround me by the perfumes and the flowers of spring; dress my hair with care; let me fall asleep amidst the sound of harmonious

Death of Mirabeau, April 2, 1791.

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music." Being aware that recovery was hopeless, he earnestly implored his attendants to give him laudanum to put a period to his existence. His feet were already cold, but his countenance still retained its animation, his eye its wonted fire, as if death spared to the last the abode of so much genius. Feigning to comply, they gave him a cup, containing what they assured him was opium. He calmly drank it off, fell back on his pillow, and expired.[1]

20th April, 1791.

[1] Th. i. 281, 282. De Staël, i. 408. Lac. viii. 133.

Such was the end of Mirabeau, the first master spirit which arose amidst the troubles of the Revolution. He was upwards of forty years of age when he entered public life; but his reputation was already great at the opening of the States-General, and he was looked to as the tribune who was to support the cause of the people against the violence of the crown. Endowed with splendid talents, but impelled by insatiable ambition; gifted with a clear intellect, but the prey of inordinate passions; sagacious in the perception of truth, but indifferent as to the means by which distinction was to be acquired; without great information derived from study, but an unrivalled power of turning what he possessed to the best account,—he affords a memorable example of the inefficacy of mere intellectual power to supply the want of moral, or the guidance of religious feeling. He was too impetuous to make himself master of any subject; studied nothing profoundly, and owed almost all the writings to which his name was attached, and many of the speeches which he delivered, to Dumont and Duroverai, who aided him in his Herculean labours. His greatest talent consisted in a strong and ardent imagination, a nervous elocution, and an unrivalled power of seizing at once the spirit of the assembly which he was addressing, and

applying the whole force of his mind to the point from which the resistance proceeded. Great as his influence was in the Assembly, it was less than it would have been, but for the consequences of his irregular life; and the general belief entertained of his want of principle, made the league with the court, in the close of his career, be ascribed to venal, when it was rather owing to patriotic motives. His inordinate passions cut him short in the most splendid period of his career,—in the vigour of his talents, and the zenith of his power, when he was about to undertake the glorious task of healing the wounds of the Revolution. Neckar said that he was "an aristocrat by inclination; a tribune by calculation;" and such in truth was his character; his primary object was to acquire distinction; he espoused at first the popular side, because it offered the fairest chance of gaining celebrity; he was prepared at last to leave it, when he found the gales of popular favour inclining to others more sanguinary, and less enlightened than himself.[1]

[1] De Staël, i. 186, 259. Th. i. 123, 124, 125. Dum. 276, 277.

On his death-bed, he perceived, in the clearest manner, the disastrous consequences which were likely to flow from the ambitious career into which he had had so large a share in precipitating the commons of France. "When I am no more," he said, "my worth will become known. The misfortunes which I have arrested will then pour on all sides on France; the criminal faction which now trembles before me, will be unbridled. I have, before my eyes unbounded presentiments of disaster. We now see how much we erred in not preventing the commons from assuming the name of the National Assembly; since they gained that victory they have never ceased to show themselves unworthy of it.

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They have chosen to govern the King, instead of governing by him; but soon neither he nor they will rule the country, but a vile faction, which will overspread it with horrors."[1]

[1] Dumont, 267, 268.

His death was felt by all as a public calamity; by the people, because he had been the early leader, and intrepid champion of freedom; by the royalists, because they trusted to his support against the violence of the democratical party. All Paris assembled at his funeral obsequies, which were celebrated with extraordinary pomp by torch-light, amidst the tears of innumerable spectators; 20,000 national guards, and delegates from all the sections of Paris, accompanied the corpse to the Pantheon, where it was placed by the remains of Des Cartes. The bones of Voltaire, and subsequently those of Rousseau, were soon after removed to the same cemetery; over the noble portico of which were inscribed the words—"Aux Grandes Ames la Patrie Reconnoissante."[2]

[2] Th. i. 282. Lac. viii. 135. De Staël, i. 408.

The death of Franklin was about the same time commemorated with strong public feeling in Paris. The loss of the patriot philosopher excited no such mingled feelings; unmixed regret, unalloyed admiration, attended his memory. Over his bust was placed the beautiful epitaph, in allusion to his scientific discoveries, and patriotic exertions:—

Eripuit cœlo fulmen sceptrumque tyrannis.

The literary and philosophical characters in Paris who had done so much to urge on the tempest of democracy, were now fully sensible of the ungovernable nature of the power which they had excited. Volney, long one of Mirabeau's intimate friends, openly expressed, in his caustic way, his sense of the thraldom which the Assembly had imposed on itself.

"Can you pretend," said he, "to command silence to the galleries? Our masters sit there, it is but reasonable they should applaud or censure their servants' speeches."—"I am astonished to hear you," said one of the bystanders to the Abbé Sabatier, who had first originated the cry for the States-General, "rail so violently at an Assembly which you had so powerful a hand in calling into existence."—"Yes," replied the abbé, "but they have changed my States-General at nurse."—"The States-General," said Marmontel, "always remind me of an expression of Madame de Sevigné, 'I would admire Provence, if I had never seen the Provencaux.'"[1]

[1] Dumont, 250, 252. Ségur, iii. 384.

The death of Mirabeau did not extinguish the plans which he had formed for the escape of the King. His state of thraldom was too obvious to be disguised: deprived of the liberty of even visiting his own palaces; restrained by the mob, whom even La Fayette could not control; without power, without money, without consideration, it was mere mockery to talk of the throne as forming a constituent part of the government. The experiment of a constitutional monarchy had been tried and failed; the president of a republic would have had more real authority; his palace was nothing but a splendid prison.

M. de Bouillé was the person on whom the royal family depended in their distress, and Breteuil the counsellor who directed their steps. For some time past he had prepared every thing for their reception, and under covert of a military movement on the frontier, had drawn together the most faithful of his troops, to a camp at Montmedy. Detachments were placed along the road to protect their journey, on the pretext of securing the safe passage of the military chest, which was expected from Paris.[2]

[2] Mig. i. 132. Th. i. 287.

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Plans of the Court. June 20.

On their side the royal family were not idle Their design, known to few, was betrayed by none; their manner indicated more than usual confidence; and at length, on the 20th June, the King and Dauphin, the Princess Elizabeth, and Madame de Tourzel, succeeded in reaching in disguise a carriage on the Boulevards. The Queen, who set out with a single attendant to avoid suspicion, had nearly discovered their design. Both being ignorant of the streets of Paris, they lost their way, and accidentally met the carriage of La Fayette, which they only avoided by concealing themselves under the colonnade of the Louvre. At length they reached the trembling fugitives, and instantly set out on the road to Montmedy and Chalons. They passed the barrier without being discovered, and proceeded several days from Paris in perfect safety. The success of their enterprise, the distance from Paris, the near approach of the loyal corps under Bouillé, occasioned a fatal relaxation in their precautions. The King delayed too long on the road, and had the imprudence to show himself publicly at Chalons, where he was recognised by some persons, who, however, had the humanity to keep the secret. At Saint Menehould, the next stage, the postmaster, Drouet, was struck by the resemblance of his countenance to the engraving on the assignat; the age, the number of the royal family, confirmed him in his suspicions, and, after the carriage had departed, he sounded the alarm, and despatched one of his friends on a swift horse to cross the country, and intercept him at the succeeding post of Varennes.[1]

[1] Lac. viii. 248, 256. Bouillé, ii. 275, 280. Mig. i. 132. Th. i. 289.

It is painful to reflect on the number of accidents which, by a strange fatality, combined to ruin the enterprise at the very moment when its success

seemed certain. The officer in command at Saint Menehould, observing the motions of Drouet, sounded his trumpets to horse; but the national guard surrounded the stables, and prevented the dragoons from mounting their horses. An intrepid sergeant, whom he despatched on the footsteps of the emissary, though he got sight of the pursuer, lost him in a wood. The officer commanding the detachment at Clermont no sooner heard of the arrival of the royal carriages, than he mounted his horse and commanded his men to follow; but a rumour of the quality of the fugitives had got abroad, and they refused to obey. At Varennes, the royal family were seized with consternation at finding neither relays of horses nor a guard of soldiers; in vain they urged the postillions to proceed; they delayed their journey for some hours, till Drouet had time to rouse the national guard and barricade a bridge at the eastern side of the town, through which the road passed. When the King arrived at the bridge, the two gardes du corps, who were seated on the front of the carriage, prepared their arms to force the passage; but the King, finding his progress opposed by a considerable force, and the muskets of the national guard presented at the carriage, commanded them to submit. The royal fugitives were seized and reconducted by the armed multitude to the post, from whence information was immediately despatched with the important intelligence to Paris. Fortune had not yet exhausted her malice. Within an hour after the arrest of the King, two squadrons of dragoons, under the command of M. de Goguelas, arrived. The King, deceived by the apparent kindness of the Mayor, persuaded him to delay the employment of force, and disclosed his name to the perfidious magistrate, who,

Journey to Varennes.

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instead of acting with the generosity which such conduct deserved, immediately sounded the tocsin, and assembled the national guards from all the communes in the vicinity. Fresh squadrons of horse, detached by M. de Bouillé, arrived; but all the efforts of their officers could not prevail on them to assist the King, and he remained in custody at Varennes.[1]

[1] Bouillé's Memoirs, ii. 290. Lac. viii. 265, 267. Th. i. 293, 295, 296.

Arrest of the King, and his return to Paris.

During the whole of this fatal night, M. de Bouillé was on horseback at the head of the regiment of Royal Allemand, whose fidelity could be relied on, under the walls of Stenay, anxiously expecting the arrival of the King. Informed too late of the arrest at Varennes, he distributed a louis to each of his soldiers, and set out at the gallop to effect his deliverance. He arrived at Varennes an hour and a half after the aide-de-camp of General La Fayette had entered, with an order to bring the fugitives immediately back to Paris. The royal family had set off an hour before, under a strong guard, on the road to the capital, and the horses of the German regiments were so totally exhausted by the exertions they had made, that farther pursuit was impossible. With inexpressible anguish M. de Bouillé was compelled to renounce an object so long the object of his ardent wishes, and doomed soon to witness a succession of unfortunate events, which consigned this virtuous monarch to a prison and the scaffold.[2]

[2] Lac. viii. 268. Bouillé's Memoirs, ii. 298.

Various accidents, doubtless, contributed to disconcert this well-combined enterprise, but they might all have been surmounted but for the treachery or disgraceful irresolution of the royal troops, and the officious zeal with which the national guard assembled to prevent the escape of their sovereign. History can find no pardon for such conduct. Patriotism cannot

excuse the citizen, who sought to consign a virtuous monarch and his innocent family to the scaffold. Honour blushes for the soldiers, who forgot their loyalty amidst the cries of the populace, and permitted their sovereign, the heir of twenty kings, to be dragged captive from amidst their armed squadrons. The warmest friend of freedom, if he has a spark of humanity in his bosom, the most ardent republican, if not steeled against every sentiment of honour, must revolt at such baseness. Britain may well exult at the different conduct which her people exhibited to their fugitive monarchs, under the same circumstances, and contrast with the arrest of Louis at Varennes, the fidelity of the western counties to Charles II., after the battle of Worcester, and the devotion of the Scotch Highlanders to the Pretender, after the defeat of Culloden.* CHAP. IV. 1791.

Paris was in the utmost consternation when the escape of the King was discovered. The public joy was proportionally great when the intelligence of his arrest was received. Three commissioners, Pétion, La Tour Maubourg, and Barnave, were despatched to reconduct the prisoners to Paris. They met them at Epernay, and travelled with them to the Tuileries. During the journey Barnave, though a stern republican, was so melted by the graceful dignity of the Queen, and impressed with the good sense and benevolence of the King, that he became inclined to the royal cause, and ever after supported their fortunes.[1] Consternation at Paris.

[1] Th. i. 298, 299. Mig. i. 134. Lac. viii. 270, 272.

The Queen, perceiving from the manners and conversation of Barnave, that he was a man of generous

* The secret was intrusted to above 200 persons, most of them in the very poorest circumstances. L.30,000 was offered for his apprehension; confiscation and death pronounced against his adherents; yet not one Highlander was faithless to his sovereign.

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feeling and enlightened intellect, conversed openly with him, and produced an impression on his mind which was never afterwards effaced. His attentions to her were so delicate, and his conduct so gentle, that she assured Madame Campan, on her return, that she forgave him all the injuries he had inflicted on her family,—an indulgence which she could not extend to the many nobles who had betrayed the throne by joining the popular cause. Pétion's conduct, on the other hand, was so gross, and his manners to the illustrious captives so insolent, that it was with difficulty that Barnave could restrain his indignation. A poor curate approached the carriage to address the King: The mob who surrounded it instantly fell upon him, threw him on the ground, and were on the point of putting him to death. "Tigers!" cried Barnave, "have you ceased to be Frenchmen? Calling yourselves brave, have you become assassins?" The difference between the constitutionalists and democrats was already greater than between the former and the throne. From that time forward the Queen intrusted her cause to his care more than to any other man in the Assembly. "How often would factions the most opposite be reconciled, if they could meet and read each other's thoughts!"[1]

[1] Madame de Campan, ii. 150, *et seq.* Th. i. 289, 299.

The barbarity of the people was singularly evinced during the journey back to Paris. The two body guards, who had periled their life in the service of their sovereign, were chained on the outside of the carriage; peasants, armed with scythes and pitchforks, mixed with the escort, uttering the bitterest reproaches; and at each village the municipal authorities assembled to vent their execrations upon the fallen monarch. Unable to bear such inhuman conduct, the Count de Dampierre, a nobleman inhabiting

a chateau near the road, approached to kiss the hand of the King. He was instantly pierced by several balls from the escort, his blood sprinkled the royal carriage, and his remains were torn to pieces by the savage multitude.[1] CHAP. IV. 1791. [1] Lac. viii. 271. Camp. ii. 151.

During the first transports of alarm and indignation, La Fayette was nearly massacred by the populace of Paris, so general was the belief that the royal family could not have escaped without his connivance.[2] The aide-de-camp whom he had despatched on the first alarm on the road to Varennes, narrowly escaped the same fate. Had he been killed, the royal fugitives would have still been at Varennes when M. de Bouillé arrived, and all their subsequent misfortunes have been avoided. [2] Lac. viii. 276.

At length the captives entered Paris. An immense crowd was assembled to witness their return, who received them in sullen silence. The national guard nowhere presented arms; threatening and frightful cries were heard from the multitude; the people, without uncovering themselves, gazed upon their victims. It required the utmost efforts of La Tour Maubourg and Barnave to prevent the two faithful body guards from being murdered on the stairs of the Tuileries. Opinions were much divided upon the consequence of their seizure: The Democrats openly rejoiced in the re-establishment of their power over the royal family; the humane were already terrified by the prospect of the fate which, to all appearance, awaited them; the thoughtful, embarrassed by the consideration of their disposal.[3] Return to Paris. [3] Lac. viii. 281, 282, 283.

In truth, after they were fairly gone, few of the men of any consideration in Paris were desirous for their arrest. The leaders of the popular party were rejoiced at the near prospect of a republic, which

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his flight occasioned; the Constitutionalists, in good faith, desired to see him established at Montmedy, and emancipated from the state of thraldom in which he had so long been held by the populace; many of the Royalists were not displeased at the abandonment of the helm by a monarch, whose concessions had brought the monarchy to the brink of ruin; all gratified at his extrication from the iron despotism of Parisian democracy. In sending the commissioners to arrest the King, the Assembly, in opposition to its better judgment, yielded to the clamours of an impassioned populace.[1]

[1] Th. i. 292, 293.

"The National Assembly," says Napoleon, "never committed so great an error, as in bringing back the King from Varennes. A fugitive and powerless, he was hastening to the frontier, and in a few hours would have been out of the French territory. What should they have done in these circumstances? Clearly facilitated his escape, and declared the throne vacant by his desertion; they would thus have avoided the infamy of a regicide government, and attained their great object of republican institutions. Instead of which, by bringing him back, they embarrassed themselves with a sovereign whom they had no just reason for destroying, and lost the inestimable advantage of getting quit of the royal family, without an act of cruelty."[2] These are the words of a man who never scrupled at the means necessary to gain an end; who was weakened by no mawkish sensibility, and deterred by no imaginary dangers. They are a fine illustration of the eternal truth that cruelty is in general as shortsighted as it is inhuman, and that no conduct is so wise as that which is the least open to moral reproach.

[2] Napoleon's Memoirs, i. 1.

The return of the King a captive to Paris, and the

necessity of settling something definitive as to his fate, occasioned an immediate division between the parties in the capital, and first led to the open avowal of Republican principles. The mob, with savage ferocity, openly demanded his head; a Republic was loudly called for in the clubs of the Cordeliers and Jacobins; Robespierre, Marat, and their associates, daily inflamed the public mind by publications and speeches, having the most revolutionary tendency.[1]

First origin of Republican ideas.

[1] Mig. i. 134. Th. i. 301.

"If a Republic," said Condorcet, "ensues in consequence of a new Revolution, the results will be terrible; but if it is proclaimed just now, during the omnipotence of the Assembly, the transition will be easy; and it is incomparably better to do it when the power of the King is wholly prostrated, than it will be when he may so far have regained it as to make an effort to avert the blow." No one at that period ventured to argue in the Assembly that royalty was desirable in itself, or as a counterpoise to the ambition of the people; the fact that such a doctrine could not be broached in the legislature, is the strongest proof how indispensable it is to regulated freedom that it should exist.[2]

[2] Dumont, 325.

Seditious cries were incessantly heard in the streets; an expression of ferocity characterised the countenances of the numerous groups assembled in the public places; and the frightful figures began to be seen who had emerged from obscurity on the 5th October, and subsequently proved triumphant during the Reign of Terror. On the other hand, the upright and intelligent part of the Assembly, awakened by the threatening signs which surrounded them to a sense of the impending danger, united their strength to resist the multitude. Barnave, Duport, and La-

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meth, although passionate friends of freedom, coalesced with La Fayette and the supporters of a constitutional monarchy. In the struggle which ensued, the want of the powerful voice of Mirabeau was severely felt. But even his commanding eloquence would have been unavailing. In those days of rising democracy and patrician desertion, nothing could resist the new-born energy of the people.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 134, 135. Lac. viii. 284, 285, 292. De Staël, i. 361.

On the morning after his return, Louis was, by a decree of the Assembly, provisionally suspended from his functions, and a band, composed of national guards, placed over his person, that of the Queen, and the Dauphin. All the three were judicially and minutely examined by three deputies, but nothing tending to criminate either elicited. They were strictly guarded in the palace, and allowed only to take a morning walk in the garden of the Tuileries before the public were admitted; while the Assembly prepared a legislative measure on the subject of his flight. Barnave and the two Lameths now had the generosity openly to espouse the cause of the unfortunate monarch, and it was in a great degree owing to the address and ability of the former, who suggested the answers of the King and Queen to the commissioners of the Assembly, that he was able to show that he never intended to leave France, but only to extricate himself from the dangers of the capital. Bouillé, at the same time, wrote a letter to the Assembly, in which he generously took upon himself the entire criminality of the journey, by protesting that he was its sole author; while he declared, in the name of the allied sovereigns, to whose territories he soon after retired, that he would hold them responsible for the safety of the royal prisoners.[2]

[2] Th. i. 302, 303.

The object of the Republicans was to make the flight of the King the immediate pretext for his dethronement and death; that of the Constitutionalists, to preserve the throne notwithstanding the unfortunate issue of that attempt. The examination of Louis, on the object of his journey to Varennes, was intended by the Republicans to be the groundwork of his prosecution; but it was so adroitly managed by the committee, to whom it was referred, that, instead of effecting that object, it went far to exculpate him even in the eyes of the most violent of the Jacobin party. The seven committees to whom that important examination was referred, reported that the journey of the King afforded no foundation for an accusation against him. The debate on this report called forth the most distinguished leaders, and developed the principles on both sides. The inviolability of the King's person, which had been solemnly agreed to by the Assembly, was the basis of the argument on the constitutional side. "To admit," said Robespierre, in answer, "the inviolability of the King for acts which are personal to himself, is to establish a god upon earth. We can allow no fiction to consecrate impunity to crime, or give any man a right to bathe our families in blood. But you have decreed, it is said, this inviolability: so much the worse. An authority more powerful than that of the constitution now condemns it; the authority of reason, the conscience of the people, the duty of providing for their safety. The constitution has not decreed the absolute inviolability of the sovereign; it has only declared him not answerable for the acts of his ministers. To this privilege, already immense, are you prepared to add an immunity from every personal offence: from perjury, murder, or robbery?

Object of the Republicans.

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Shall we, who have levelled so many other distinctions, leave this, the most dangerous of them all? Ask of England if she recognises such an impunity in her sovereigns? Would you behold a beloved son murdered before your eyes by a furious king, and hesitate to deliver him over to criminal justice? Enact laws which punish all crimes without exception, or suffer the people to avenge them for themselves. You have heard the oaths of the King. Where is the juryman, who, after having heard his manifesto, and the account of his journey, would hesitate to declare him guilty of perjury, that is, felony towards the nation? The King is inviolable; but so are you. Do you now contend for his privilege to murder with impunity millions of his subjects? Do you dare to pronounce the King innocent, when the nation have declared him guilty? Consult its good sense, since your own has abandoned you. I am called a republican: whether I am or not, I declare my conviction, that any form of government is better than that of a feeble monarch, alternately the prey of contending factions."[1]

[1] Lac. viii. 292, 295, 296. Mig. i. 135, 136.

"Regenerators of the empire," said Barnave, in reply, "follow; continue the course you have commenced. You have already shown that you have courage enough to destroy the abuses of power; now is the time to demonstrate, that you have the wisdom to protect the institutions you have formed. At the moment that we evince our strength, let us manifest our moderation; let us exhibit to the world, intent on our movements, the fair spectacle of peace and justice. What would the trial of the King be, but the proclamation of a Republic? Are you prepared to destroy, at the first shock, the constitution you have framed with so much care? You are justly

proud of having closed a Revolution, without a parallel in the annals of the world: you are now called on to commence a new one: to open a gulf, of which no human wisdom can see the bottom; in which laws, lives, and property, would be alike swallowed up. With wisdom and moderation, you have exercised the vast powers committed to you by the state: You have created liberty; beware of substituting in its stead a violent and sanguinary despotism. Be assured that those who now propose to pass sentence on the King, will do the same to yourselves, when you first thwart their ambition. If you prolong the Revolution, it will increase in violence. You will be beset with clamours for confiscations and murders; the people will never be satisfied but with substantial advantages, and they cannot be obtained, but by destroying their superiors. The world hitherto has been awed by the powers we have developed; let them now be charmed by the gentleness which graces them."

Moved by these generous sentiments, the Assembly adopted the report of the committee, with only seven dissentient voices. But to this decree was annexed, as a concession to the popular party, a clause, declaring, that if the King shall put himself at the head of an armed force, and direct it against the nation, he shall be deemed to have abdicated, and shall be responsible for his acts as an ordinary citizen. Of this enactment the popular party made fatal use in the subsequent insurrections against the throne.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 137. Lac. viii. 298, 302. Th. i. 309, 310.

Foiled in their endeavours to influence the Assembly, the democrats next endeavoured to rouse the people. A petition, drawn up by Brissot, author of the Patriot Français, and an able Republican, was taken to the Champs de Mars for signature. The

Revolt in Champs de Mars.

CHAP. IV. 1791. 17th July. clubs of the Jacobins and the Cordeliers declared that they would no longer recognise Louis as sovereign, and published the most inflammatory harangues, which were immediately placarded in all the streets of Paris. A general insurrection was prepared for the following day. "We will repair," said they, "to the Field of the Federation, and an hundred thousand men will dethrone the perjured King. That day will be the last of all the friends of treason." The 17th July was the day fixed for the insurrection; there was no regular force in Paris, every thing depended on the firmness of the national guard.[1]

Mig. i. 137. Lac. viii. 308. Th. i. 311.

On the morning of the 17th, two different bands of the people were in motion; one decently clothed, grave in manner, small in number, headed by Brissot; the other, hideous in aspect, ferocious in language, formidable in numbers, under the guidance of Robespierre. Both were confident of success, and sure of impunity; for hitherto not a single insurrection had been suppressed, and not one popular crime, excepting the murder of the baker François, had been punished. Two unhappy invalids had placed themselves under the steps of the altar on the Champs de Mars to observe the extraordinary scene; a cry arose that they were assassins placed there to blow up the leaders of the people; without giving themselves the trouble to ascertain whether any powder was there, they beheaded the unhappy wretches on the spot, and paraded their heads on pikes round the altar of France.[2]

[1] Lac. viii. 309, 312. Th. i. 311.

Vigorous measures of the Assembly.

The Assembly took the most energetic measures to support their authority. They declared their sittings permanent, and caused the municipality to summon the national guard to their several rendezvouses; M. La Fayette put himself at their head, and pro-

ceeded towards the Champs de Mars, followed by 1200 grenadiers. On the road, a traitor in the ranks discharged a pistol at him, which fortunately missed its aim; he had the magnanimity to liberate the offender from the confinement in which he was placed. Mean while, the red flag was hoisted by order of Bailly, at the hôtel de Ville, and the good citizens earnestly urged the proclamation of martial law. Arrived in sight of the insurgents, La Fayette unfurled the red flag, and summoned the multitude, in the name of the law, to disperse; cries of "A bas le drapeau rouge! à bas les baionnettes!" accompanied by volleys of stones, were the only answer. A discharge in the air was then given, which, not being attended by the effect of intimidation, La Fayette resolutely ordered a volley point-blank, which immediately brought down above one hundred of the insurgents. In an instant the crowd dispersed, and the Champs de Mars was deserted. Robespierre, Marat, and the other leaders of the insurrection, disappeared, and the discouragement of their party was complete. Trembling with apprehension, he implored an asylum from his friends, deeming himself insecure, notwithstanding his inviolability as deputy, in his obscure abode. The revolutionary fury was effectually quelled, and had the government possessed the energy to have marched on the clubs of the Jacobins and of the Cordeliers, and closed these great fountains of treason, the constitutional monarchy might have been established, and the Reign of Terror prevented. But this act of vigour being followed by no others of the same character, gradually lost its effect; the clubs resumed their inflammatory debates, the demagogues reappeared from their retreats, and the march of the Revolution continued with redoubled vigour.[1] The

Victory of La Fayette.

[1] Mig. i. 138, 139. Lac. viii. 312, 315. Th. i. 311, 312.

CHAP. IV. 1791. recollection of so signal a defeat, however, sunk deep in the minds of the democrats, and they took a bloody revenge, years afterwards, upon the intrepid Bailly, who had first hoisted the signal of resistance to popular licentiousness.

But do not follow it up.

The Assembly was embarrassed by the consequences of their success. They received congratulatory addresses from every part of France; but all of them had a moderate, many a royalist, tendency, a signal proof of the ease with which at this period the Revolution might have been checked by proper firmness in the Government and union in the higher classes. It was difficult, in the close of their career, to depart from the principles with which they commenced; and they were alarmed at the new allies who crowded round their victorious standard. Indecision, in consequence, characterised their measures. Recollection of the past inclined them to popular, dread of the future to constitutional measures. In their efforts to please all factions, they acquired an ascendency over none, and left the monarchy a prey to the furious passions which now agitated the people from the consequences of the ferment they themselves had created.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 139. Lac. viii. 317, 318. Th. i. 315.

The termination of their labours was now approaching. The several committees to whom the different departments of the constitution had been referred, had all made their reports; the members were fatigued with their divisions, the people desirous of exercising the powers of election. Nothing remained but to combine the decrees regarding the constitution into one act, and submit it for the sanction of the King.[2]

[2] Mig. i. 140. Th. i. 316.

It was proposed, in consolidating the different decrees regarding the constitution, to revise some of

its articles. The democratic tendency of many of its parts was already perceived; and the Assembly trembled at the agitation which pervaded the empire. All the subordinate questions which remained were decided in favour of the royal authority; but they wanted courage, and perhaps had not influence to alter the cardinal points of the constitution. They were strongly urged, before it was too late, to correct their faults. "Have the courage," said Malouet, "to confess your errors, and repair them. You are inclined to efface some blemishes; go a step further, and correct some deformities. While the work is still in your hands, is it not better to give more strength and stability to the fabric?" The design of Barnave, Malouet, and the Lameths, who were now fully alive to the perilous nature of the constitution they had framed, was to restore the separation of the chambers, and the absolute veto to the crown. For this purpose, it was agreed that Malouet should propose the revision of these and many other articles of the constitution; that Barnave should reply in vehement strains, but at the same time give up those that were agreed on as proved by experience to be inexpedient. But while this was the general opinion of the rational and prudent members, the violent party men on both sides, though from different motives, combined to hasten the dissolution of the Assembly. The Royalists wished that the faults of the constitution should remain so glaring, as to render it impossible to put it in practice. The Jacobins, more alive to the signs of the times, dreaded the reaction in favour of order which had recently arisen among the higher, and hoped every thing from the revolutionary spirit which was now spreading among the lower orders. In vain Barnave, Lameth,

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Proposed to modify the constitution.

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Chapelier, and other enlightened men, implored them to retain the legislative power yet a while in their hands; they were met by complaints of their unpopularity, and of the necessity of dissolving while yet any influence remained, and the majority, weary of the work of regeneration, resolved to separate. As a last measure of security, they declared that the representatives of France might revise the constitution, but not till after the expiration of thirty years; a vain precaution, immediately forgotten amidst the impetuosity and struggles of their successors.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 140, 145. Lac. viii. 320, 321. Th. i. 315. Bouillé, ii. 314, *et seq.*

Self-denying Ordinance.

Before finally submitting the constitution to the King, the Assembly, on the motion of Robespierre, passed a destructive measure, similar to the self-denying ordinance of the English Parliament, declaring that none of their members should be capable of election into the next legislature. This resolution, so ruinous in its consequences, was produced by various motives. The desire of regaining their power on the part of the aristocrats; unextinguishable resentment against the leaders of the Assembly on the part of the court; wild hopes of anarchy, and a fear of reaction in the existing members, on the part of the democrats; disinterested patriotism among the friends of their country; a wish for the popularity consequent on a disinterested action, combined to produce a decree fraught with the last miseries to France. The King was so ill advised at this juncture, that he employed all his own influence, and that of the Queen, to procure the enactment of this decree. The idea was prevalent among the Royalists that the public mind was entirely changed; that the people had become attached to the sovereign; and that if the old members could only be excluded, an Assembly would be returned at the next election which

would undo all that the former one had done. When the question accordingly was proposed, the Royalists united with the Jacobins, and stifling all arguments by a cry for the vote, passed the fatal resolution.[1] This system of changing their governors at stated periods, always has, and always will be, a favourite theme with Republicans, because it magnifies their own, and diminishes their rulers' importance; but it is more ruinous than any other system that can be devised to national welfare, because it places the direction of affairs for ever in inexperienced hands, and gives to private interest the weight which should belong to public virtue.

[1] Dumont, 338, 339. Mig. i. 141. Th. i. 314. Lac. viii. 323. Bouillé, ii. 330, 345.

Previous to the act of the constitution being submitted to the King, he was reinvested with the command of his Guard, and restored to the freedom of which he had been deprived since his arrest at Varennes. After several days' careful examination, he declared his acceptance in the following terms:—"I accept the constitution; I engage to maintain it alike against civil discord and foreign aggression, and to enforce its execution to the utmost of my power." This message occasioned the warmest applause. La Fayette, taking advantage of the moment, procured a general amnesty for all those who had been engaged in the flight of the King, or compromised by the events of the Revolution.[2]

King reinvested with his power.

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[2] Mig. i. 141. Th. i. 316. Lac. viii. 445.

On the following day, the King repaired in person to the Assembly, to declare his acceptance of the constitution. An immense crowd accompanied him with loud acclamations; he was the object of the momentary applause of the tribunes of the people; but the altered state of the royal authority was evinced by the formalities observed even in the midst of the general enthusiasm. The monarch was no longer

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seated on a throne apart from his subjects; two chairs, in every respect alike, were allotted to him, and to the president; and he did not possess, even in appearance, more authority than the leader of that haughty body.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 141. Lac. viii. 351. Th. i. 316.

Closing of the Assembly.

At length, on the 29th September, the sittings of the Assembly were closed. The King attended in person, and delivered a speech full of generous sentiments and eloquent expressions. "In returning to your constituents," said he, "you have still an important duty to discharge; you have to make known to the citizens the real meaning of the laws you have enacted, and to explain my sentiments to the people. Tell them, that the King will always be their first and best friend; that he has need of their affection; that he knows no enjoyment but in them, and with them; that the hope of contributing to their happiness will sustain his courage, as the satisfaction of having done so will constitute his reward." Loud and sincere applause followed these expressions. The President, Thouret, then, with a loud voice, said, "The Constituent Assembly declares its mission accomplished, and its sittings are now closed."[2]

[2] Mig. i. 142. Lac. viii. 352.

Magnificent fêtes were ordered by the King for the occasion, which exhausted the already weakened resources of the throne. The palace and gardens of the Tuileries were superbly illuminated, and the King, with the Queen and royal family, drove through the long-lighted avenues of the Champs Elysées amidst the acclamations of the people. But a vague disquietude pervaded all ranks of society;[3] the monarch sought in vain for the expressions of sincere joy which appeared on the fête of the Federation of 14th July; then, all was confidence and hope,—now,

[3] De Staël, i. 434, 436. Lac. viii. 352, 353.

the horrors of anarchy were daily anticipated. The Assembly had declared the Revolution closed; all persons of intelligence feared that it was only about to commence. CHAP. IV. 1791.

Such is the history of the Constituent Assembly of France; an Assembly which, amidst much good, has produced more evil than any which has ever existed in the world. Called to the highest destinies, intrusted with the noblest duties, it was looked to as commencing a new era in modern civilisation, as regenerating an empire grey with feudal corruption, but teeming with popular energy. How it accomplished the task, is now ascertained by experience. Time, the great vindicator of truth, has unfolded its errors, and illustrated its virtues.

Merits and errors of the Constituent Assembly.

The great evils which afflicted France were removed by its exertions. Liberty of religious worship, but imperfectly provided for in 1787, was secured in its fullest extent; torture, and the punishment of the wheel, abolished; trial by jury, publicity of criminal proceedings, the examination of witnesses before the accused, counsel for his defence, fixed by law; the ancient parliaments, the fastnesses of a varied jurisprudence, though ennobled by great exertions in favour of freedom, suppressed, and one uniform system of criminal jurisprudence established; *lettres de cachet* annihilated; exemption from taxation on the part of the nobles and the clergy extinguished; an equal system of finance established through the whole kingdom; the most oppressive imposts, those on salt and tobacco, the taille, and the tithes, suppressed; the privileges of the nobility, the feudal burdens, abolished. France owes to the Constituent Assembly the doubtful experiment of national guards; the opening of the army to courage and ability from

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every class of society; and a general distribution of landed property among the labouring classes,—the greatest benefit, when not brought about by injustice or the spoliation of others, which can be conferred upon a nation.[1]* The beneficial effect of these changes was speedily demonstrated by the consequences of the errors into which her government subsequently fell. They enabled the nation to bear and to prosper under accumulated evils, any one of which would have extinguished the national strength under the monarchy,—national bankruptcy, depreciated assignats, civil divisions, the Reign of Terror, foreign invasion, the conscription of Napoleon, subjugation by Europe.

[1] De Staël, i. 276, 288.

The errors of the Constituent Assembly have produced consequences equally important, some still more lasting. By destroying, in a few months, the

* It is impossible to travel through Switzerland, Tyrol, Norway, Sweden, Biscay, and other parts of Europe, where the peasantry are proprietors of the land they cultivate, without being convinced of the great effect of such a state of things in ameliorating the condition of the lower orders, and promoting the developement of those habits of comfort and artificial wants which form the true regulator of the principle of increase. The aspect of France since the Revolution, when compared with what it was before that event, abundantly proves that its labouring poor have experienced the benefit of this change; and that if it had not been brought about by injustice, its fruits would have been highly beneficial. But no great act of iniquity can be committed by a nation any more than an individual, without its consequences being felt by the latest generations. The confiscation of land has been to France what a similar measure was to Ireland, a source of weakness and discord which will never be closed. It has destroyed the barrier alike against the crown and the populace, and left the nation no protection against the violence of either. Freedom has been rendered to the last degree precarious, from the consequences of this great change; and the subsequent irresistible authority of the central government, how tyrannical soever at Paris, may be distinctly traced to the prostration of the strength of the provinces by the destruction of their landed proprietors. The ruinous consequences of this injustice upon the future freedom of France will be amply demonstrated in the sequel of this work.

constitution of a thousand years, they set afloat all the ideas of men, and spread the fever of innovation universally throughout the empire; by confiscating the property of the church, they gave a fatal precedent of injustice, too closely followed in future years, exasperated a large and influential class, and dissolved public manners by leaving the seeds of war between the clergy and the people; by establishing the right of universal suffrage, and conferring the nomination of all offices of trust upon the nation, they habituated the people to the exercise of powers inconsistent with the monarchical form of government which they themselves had established, and which the new possessors were incapable of exercising with advantage. They diminished the influence of the crown to such a degree as to render it incapable of controlling the people, and left the kingdom a prey to factions, arising out of the hasty changes which they had introduced. Finally, by excluding themselves from the next Assembly, they deprived France of all the benefit of their experience, and permitted their successors to commence the same circle of error and innovation, to the danger of which they had been too late awakened.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 144.

By combining the legislature into one assembly, in which the representatives of the lower ranks had a decisive superiority, they in effect vested supreme political power in one single class of society: a perilous gift at all times, but in an especial manner to be dreaded when that class was in a state of violent excitement, and totally unaccustomed to the powers with which they were intrusted. By removing the check of a separate deliberative assembly they exposed the political system to the unrestrained influence of those sudden gusts of passion to which all large

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assemblages of men are occasionally subject, and to which the impetuosity of the French character rendered them in an especial manner liable. By destroying the parliaments, the hierarchy, the corporations, and the privileges of the provinces, they swept away the firmest bulwark by which constitutional freedom might have been protected in future times, by annihilating those institutions which combine men of similar interests together, and leaving only a multitude of insulated individuals to maintain a hopeless contest with the executive, and the capital wielding at will the power of the army, and the resources of Government. By their overthrow of the national religion, and appropriation to secular purposes of all the funds for its support, they not only gave the deepest wound to public virtue, but inflicted an irreparable injury on the cause of freedom, by arraying under opposite banners the two great governing powers of the human mind—diminishing the influence of the elevated and spiritual, and removing the control to the selfish principles of our nature.

It is a fact worthy of the most serious consideration, from all who study the action and progress of the human mind under the influence of such convulsions, that all these great and perilous changes were carried into effect by the Constituent Assembly, without any authority from their constituents, and directly in the face of the cahiers containing the official announcement of their intentions. The form of government which they established, the confiscation of ecclesiastical property which they introduced, the abolition of the provincial Parliaments, the suspensive veto, the destruction of titles of honour, the infringement on the right of the King to make peace or war, the nomination of judges by the people,[1] were

[1] Calonne, 216, 218, 222, 223, 290, 304.

all so many usurpations directly contrary to the great majority of these official instruments, which still remain a monument of the moderation of the people at the commencement, as their subsequent acts were proof of their madness during the progress, of the Revolution.

The single fault of the Constituent Assembly which led to all these disastrous consequences was, that, losing sight of the object for which alone they were assembled, the redress of grievances, they directed all their efforts to the attainment of power. Instead of following out the first object, and improving the fabric of the state, to which they were called by their monarch and sent by their country, they destroyed all the balances and equipoises which give it a steady direction, and serve as correctives to any violent disposition which may exist in any of the orders. When they had done this they instantly, and with unpardonable perfidy, laid the axe to the root equally of public faith and private right, by confiscating the property of the church. They made and recorded, what has been aptly styled by Mr Burke a digest of anarchy called the Rights of Man, and by their influence destroyed every hold of authority by opinion, religious or civil, on the minds of the people. "The real object," says Mr Burke, "of all this was to level all those institutions and sever all those connexions, natural, religious, and civil, which hold together society by a chain of subordination—to raise soldiers against their officers, tradesmen against their landlords, curates against their bishops, children against their parents." An universal liberation from all restraints, civil and religious, moral, political, and military, was the grand end of all their efforts, which the weakness of the

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[1] Burke, v. 14,15, 89.

Infinite have been the causes assigned for the disastrous progress of the French Revolution. There are four of such paramount importance that they obliterate all the others; and these are,—the fever of hasty innovation, the desertion of the country by the nobility, the character of the King, and the treachery of the army.

Passion for innovation.

A passion for innovation, a disregard for every thing sacred or venerable, a vehement wish to uproot all that is sanctioned by experience or recommended by antiquity, is the sure sign of the revolutionary fervour,—a passion totally distinct from the sober and cautious principles of real freedom. Never did this ruinous passion appear with such vehemence as in France during the sitting of the Constituent Assembly.[2] A firm union among all the higher classes, a steadfast adherence to legal right on the part of the depositaries of power, could alone be expected to stem so powerful and perilous a torrent, and this was wholly awanting at the very time when it was most required.

[2] Ségur, i. 272, 324.

The personal character of the King was doubtless the first and greatest cause which prevented this

resistance being opposed to the work of innovation, and converted the stream of improvement into the cataract of revolution. Weakness, vacillation, irresolution in presence of democratic ambition, are as fatal as in presence of a hostile army. They are the sure prelude to a bloody defeat. So strongly was this fatal defect in the King's character felt by the wisest men of the popular party in France, that they have not hesitated to ascribe to it the whole miseries of the Revolution.[1] Had a firm and resolute king been on the throne, it is doubtful whether the Revolution would have taken place, or at least whether it would have been attended by such horrors. All the measures of Louis conspired to bring it about; the benevolence and philanthropy which, duly tempered by resolution, would have formed a perfect, when combined with weakness and vacillation, produced the most dangerous of sovereigns. His indecision, weakness, and half-measures ruined every thing; the inferior causes which conspired to bring about the same disastrous result, all emanated from that source. There was hardly an epoch during the sitting of the first Assembly, after its dangerous tendency began to be perceived, when an intrepid monarch, aided by a resolute nobility, might not have averted the tempest, turned the stream of innovation into constitutional channels, and established, in conformity with the wishes of the great majority of the nation, a limited monarchy, similar to that which, for above a century, has given dignity and happiness to the British empire.[2]

Irresolution of the King.

[1] Dumont, 343.

[2] Ibid.

The treachery of the troops was the immediate cause of the catastrophe which precipitated the throne beneath the feet of the Assembly; and the terrible effects with which it was attended, the bloody tyranny

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Treachery of the troops.

which it induced, the ruinous career of foreign conquest which it occasioned, and the national subjugation in which it terminated, may in a great degree be ascribed to the treason or vacillation of these the sworn defenders of order and loyalty. But for their defection, the royal authority would have been respected, democratic ambition coerced, a rallying point afforded for the friends of order, and the changes which were required confined within safe and constitutional bounds. The revolt of the French guards was the signal for the dissolution of the bonds of society in France; and they have been hardly reconstructed, even by the terrible Committee of Public Safety, and the merciless sword of Napoleon. A memorable example of the extreme peril of soldiers tampering with their first duties, fidelity and obedience; and of the wisdom of the maxim of the first and best of modern Republicans, Carnot,—"The armed force is essentially obedient; it acts, but never deliberates."[1]

[1] Carnot, 329

What the treachery of the army had commenced, the desertion of the nobility consummated. The flight of this immense body, with their families and retainers, estimated by Mr Burke at 70,000 persons, completed the prostration of the throne, by depriving it of its best defenders. The friends of order naturally abandoned themselves to despair when they saw the army revolting, the crown yielding, and the nobility taking to flight. Who would make the show even of resisting, when these, the leaders and bulwark of the state, gave up the cause as hopeless? The energy of ambition, the confidence arising from numbers, the prestige of opinion, passed over to the other side. A party speedily becomes irresistible when its opponents shrink from the first encounter.[2]

[2] Dumont, 347.

The constitution of 1791 did not long survive its authors. The spirit of revolt commenced with the middling, but speedily descended to the lowest class. They formed the Legislative Assembly, but it rapidly perished under the assaults of the multitude; the victory had been gained by the middling ranks over the aristocracy, but the victors soon sunk beneath the blows of the populace. Such is the natural march of Revolutions; each order feels itself restrained by the one immediately above itself, and is stimulated to revolt by the successful issue of resistance to still higher authority. A firm combination among the friends of order can alone stop this disastrous progress. In France it was prevented from taking place by the delusive passion for change which infected so many of the better classes; the weakness of the King, the treachery of the army, and the pusillanimous desertion of all the higher ranks in the state.[1]

[1] De Staël, ii. 1, 9. Mig. i. 145.

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE OPENING OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY TO THE FALL OF THE MONARCHY.

ARGUMENT.

Formation of the Legislative Assembly—State of the country during the elections—Continued emigration of the nobles—Its disastrous effects—Opening of the Assembly—Its parties—The Girondists and Feuillants—Clubs in the capital, the Cordeliers and Jacobins—Contests with the church—Debate on confiscation of their property, and the laws against the emigrants—Severe decree against the latter, and against the nonjuring clergy—King refuses to sanction them; but recalls the emigrants, and sanctions the decree against the Count d'Artois—Election of a Mayor of Paris—Debate on the foreign relations—Preparations for war—They are strongly opposed by Robespierre—Change of Ministry—The Girondists admitted to power—Dumourier, his character, and Madame Roland—Foreign affairs—War desired by all parties, but especially the Girondists—King yields against his own judgment, and war declared—Massacre of Avignon—Dreadful insurrection in St Domingo—Royal Guard disbanded by the Assembly—Change of Ministry—New Ministers chosen from the Feuillants—Girondists, in revenge, organize an insurrection against the throne—La Fayette's letter to the Assembly—Tumult of 20th June—Assembly and Royal Palace both overrun by the populace—Heroic conduct of the King, Queen, and Princess Elizabeth—First appearance of Napoleon—Public indignation at this outrage—La Fayette arrives in Paris—He is not supported by the Court or National Guard, and fails—Girondists openly organize a revolt—Debates in the Assembly on that subject—Fête of 14th July—Arrival of Fédérés in Paris—Various plans of the court—Advance of the Prussians and Austrians—Proclamation of the Duke of Brunswick—Farther preparations for a revolt—Breaks out on the 10th August—Preparations of the court, and of the insurgents—King retires with the Royal Family to the Legislative Assembly—Conflict in the Place Carrousel, and massacre of the Swiss—Capture and sack of the palace—Dethronement of the King—General reflections on the errors of the Revolutionists, the Nobles, and the Allies, which led to these events.

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UNIVERSAL suffrage, or a low qualification for electors, has, in every age of democratic excitement, been the favourite object of the people. All men, it is said, are by nature equal; the superior privileges

enjoyed by some are the growth of injustice and superstition, and the first step towards rational freedom is to restore the pristine equality of the species. This principle had been acted upon, accordingly, by the Constitutional Assembly. They had given the right of voting for the national representatives to every labouring man of the better sort in France; and the Legislative Assembly affords the first example, on a great scale, in modern Europe, of the effects of a completely popular election.

If the object of government were only the protection of persons from injury or injustice, and every man, in whatever rank, were equally capable of judging on political subjects, there can be no question that the claims of the lower orders to an equal share in the representation with the higher would be well founded, because every man's life is of equal value to himself. But its object is not less the protection of property, than that of persons; and from this double duty arises the necessity of limiting the right of election to those possessing the latter advantage.

In private life, men are never deceived on this subject. In the administration of any common fund, or the disposal of common property, it never was for a moment proposed to give the smallest shareholder an equal right with the greatest,—to give a creditor holding a claim for twenty shillings, for example, on a bankrupt estate, the same vote as one possessed of a bond for L.10,000. The injustice of such a proceeding is quite apparent. The interests of the large shareholders would run the most imminent risk of being violated or neglected by those whose stake was so much more inconsiderable.

In the political world, the supposed or immediate interests of the great body of the people are not only

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different, but adverse to that of the possessors of property. To acquire, is the interest of the one; to retain, that of the other. Agrarian laws, and the equal division of property, or measures tending indirectly to that effect, will, in every age, be the wish of the unthinking multitude, who have nothing apparently to lose, and every thing to gain, by such convulsions. Their real and ultimate interests, indeed, will, in the end, inevitably suffer from such changes; but that is a remote consequence, which never will become obvious to the great body of mankind.

In the ordinary state of society, the superior intelligence and moral energy of the higher orders, give them the means of effectually controlling this natural, but dangerous tendency, on the part of their inferiors. But universal suffrage, or a low franchise, levels all the barriers, and reduces the contests of mankind to a mere calculation of numbers. In such a system, the vote of Napoleon, or Newton, has no more weight than that of an ignorant mechanic. Representatives elected under such a system are in reality nothing more than tribunes of the people, compelled to support the wishes of their constituents. The contests of party resolve themselves into a mere strife of contending interests. In periods of tranquillity, this petty warfare may produce only a selfish system of legislation; in moments of agitation it occasions an universal insurrection of the lower orders against the higher.

The Legislative Assembly.

The truth of these observations was signally demonstrated in the history of the Legislative Assembly. By the enactments of their predecessors, the whole powers of sovereignty had been vested in the people; they had obtained what almost amounted to

universal suffrage, and biennial elections; their representatives wielded despotic authority; they appointed their own magistrates, judges, and bishops; the military force of the state was in their hands; their delegates commanded the national guard, and ruled the armies. In possession of such unresisted authority, it was difficult to see what more they could desire, or what pretence could remain for insurrection against the government. Nevertheless, the legislature which they had themselves appointed, became, from the very first, the object of their dislike and jealousy; and the history of the Legislative Assembly is nothing more than the preparations for the revolt which overthrew the monarchy.[1] CHAP. V. 1791.

[1] Lac. Pr. Hist. i. 187. Th. ii. 6, 7.

"This," says the republican historian, "is the natural progress of revolutionary troubles. Ambition, the love of power, first arises in the higher orders; they exert themselves, and obtain a share of the supreme authority. But the same passion descends in society; it rapidly gains an inferior class, until at length the whole mass is in movement. Satisfied with what they have gained, all persons of intelligence strive to stop; but it is no longer in their power, they are incessantly pressed on by the crowd in their rear. Those who thus endeavour to arrest the movement, even if they are but little elevated above the lowest class, if they oppose its wishes, are called an aristocracy, and incur its odium."[2]

[2] Th. ii. 7.

Two unfortunate circumstances contributed, from the outset, to injure the formation of the Assembly. These were, the King's flight to Varennes, and the universal emigration of the nobles during the period of the primary elections.

State of the country during the primary elections.

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The intelligence of the disappearance of the King was received in most of the departments at the very time of the election of the delegates who were to choose the deputies. Terror, distrust, and anxiety, seized every breast; a general explosion of the royal partisans was expected; foreign invasion, domestic strife, universal suffering, were imagined to be at hand. In this spirit the primary elections, or the nomination of the electoral colleges, took place. But before these delegates proceeded to name the deputies, the alarm had in some degree passed away; the seizure of the King had dissipated the causes of immediate apprehension; and the revolt of the Jacobins in the Champs de Mars had opened a new source of disquietude. Hence the nomination of the deputies was far from corresponding, in all instances, with the wishes of the original electors; the latter selected, for the most part, energetic, reckless men, calculated to meet the stormy times which were anticipated; the former strove to intersperse among them a few men of property, who might have an interest in maintaining the institutions which had been formed; the one elected to destroy, the other to preserve. The majority of the deputies were men inclined to support the constitution as it was now established; the majority of the original electors desirous of a more extensive revolution.[1]

[1] Th. i. 192.

But there was one circumstance worthy of especial notice in the composition of this second Assembly, which was its almost total separation from the property of the kingdom. In this respect it offered a striking contrast to the Constituent Assembly, which, though ruled by the Tiers Etat after the pernicious union of the orders, yet numbered among its members some of the greatest proprietors and many of

the noblest names in the kingdom. But in the Legislative Assembly there were not fifty persons possessed of L.100 a-year. The property of France was thus totally unrepresented, either directly by the influence of its holders in the elections, or indirectly by sympathy and identity of interest between the members of the Assembly and the class of proprietors. The Legislature was composed almost entirely of presumptuous and half-educated young men, clerks in counting-houses, or attorneys from provincial towns, who had risen to eminence during the absence of all persons possessed of property, and recommended themselves to public notice by the vehemence with which in the popular clubs they had asserted the principles of democracy. They had in general talent enough to make them both self-sufficient and dangerous, without either knowledge profound enough to moderate their views, or property adequate to steady their ambition. If a demon had selected a body calculated to consign a nation to perdition, his choice could not have been made more happily to effect his object.[1]

[1] Burke. Thoughts on French Affairs. Works, vii. 51.

This deplorable result was in part at least owing to the flight of the nobility, so prolific in all its stages of disaster to France. The continued and increasing emigration of the landholders, contributed in the greatest degree to unhinge the public mind, and proved, perhaps, in the end, the greatest cause of the subsequent miseries of the Revolution. Their number was by this time, with their families, nearly 100,000, of the most wealthy and influential body in France.[2] All the roads to the Rhine were covered by haughty fugitives, whose inability for action was equalled only by the presumption of their language. They set their face from the first

Increased emigration of nobles.

[2] Burke, viii. 72. Lac. i. 191.

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against every species of improvement; would admit of no compromise with the popular party; and threatened their adversaries with the whole weight of European vengeance, if they persisted in demanding it. Coblentz became the great centre of the anti-revolutionary party; and to men accustomed to measure the strength of their force by the number of titles which it contained, a more formidable array could hardly be imagined. But it was totally deficient in the real weight of aristocratic assemblies, the number and spirit of their followers. The young and presumptuous nobility, possessing no estimable quality but their valour, were altogether unfit to cope with the moral energy and practical talent which had arisen among the middling orders of France. The corps of the emigrants, though always forward and gallant, were too deficient in discipline and subordination to be of much importance in the subsequent campaigns, while their impetuous counsels too often betrayed their allies into unfortunate measures. Rashness of advice, and inefficiency of conduct have, with the exception of La Vendée, characterised all the military efforts of the royalist party in France, from the commencement to the termination of the Revolution.

Its disastrous effects.

In thus deserting their country at the most critical period of its history, the French nobility betrayed equal baseness and imprudence; baseness, because it was their duty, under all hazards, to have stood by their sovereign, and not delivered him in fetters to a rebellious people; imprudence, because by joining the ranks of the stranger, and combating against their native country, they detached their own cause from that of France, and subjected themselves to the eternal reproach of bringing their country into danger

for the sake of their separate and exclusive interests. The subsequent strength of the Jacobins was mainly owing to the successful appeals which they were always able to make to the patriotism of the people, and to the foreign wars which identified their rule with a career of glory; the royalists have never recovered the disgrace of having joined the armies of the enemy, and regained the throne at the expense of national independence. How different might have been the issue of events, if, instead of rousing fruitless invasions from the German States, the French nobility had put themselves at the head of the generous efforts of their own country; if they had shared in the glories of La Vendée, or combated under the walls of Lyons! Defeat, in such circumstances, would have been respected, success unsullied; by acting as they did, overthrow became ruin, and victory humiliation.[1]

[1] Madame de Staël, ii. 1. 9.

The new Assembly opened its sittings on the 1st of October. An unfortunate event interrupted the harmony between them and the King. A deputation of sixty members was appointed to wait on Louis, but he did not receive them, and merely sent intimation by the minister of justice, that he would admit them on the following day at twelve o'clock. The meeting was cold and unsatisfactory on both sides. Shortly after, the King came in form to the Assembly; he was received with the greatest enthusiasm. His speech was directed chiefly to conciliation, and the maintenance of harmony between the different branches of the government. On this occasion, Louis experienced the strength of the republican principles, which, under the fostering hand of the Constituent Assembly, had made such rapid progress in France. They first decreed that the titles of Sire and Your

October 1, 1791. Opening of the Assembly.

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Majesty should be dropped at the ensuing ceremonial; next, that the King should be seated on a chair similar in every respect to that of the President. When the monarch refused to come to the Assembly on these conditions, they yielded that point, but insisted on sitting down when he sat, which was actually done at its opening. The King was so much affected by this circumstance, that when he returned to the Queen, he threw himself on a chair, and burst into tears.[1]

[1] Madame Campan. ii. 129. Mig. i. 147. Th. ii. 18, 19.

Though not anarchical, the Assembly was decidedly attached to the principles of democracy. The court and the nobles had exercised no sort of influence on the elections; the authority of the first was in abeyance; the latter had deserted their country. Hence, the parties in the Assembly were different from those in the Constituent. None were attached to the royal or aristocratical interests; the only question that remained, was the maintenance or the overthrow of the constitutional throne. "Et nous aussi nous voulons faire une révolution," said one of the revolutionary members shortly after his election; and this, in truth, was the feeling of a large proportion of the electors, and a considerable portion of the deputies. The desire of novelty, the ambition of power, and a restless anxiety for change, had seized the minds of most of those who had not enjoyed a share in the formation of the first constitution. The object of the first supporters of the Revolution had already become, not to destroy the work of others, but to preserve their own. According to the natural progress of revolutionary changes, the democratic part of the first Assembly was the aristocratic of the second.[2]

[2] Mig. i. 150. Toul. ii. 89. Lac. i. 192. Th. ii. 10, 11.

The members on the right, or the friends of the

constitution, were called the Feuillants, from the club which formed the centre of their power. Lameth, Barnave, Duport, Damas, and Vaublanc, formed the leaders of this party. The national guard, the army, the magistrates of the departments, in general all the constituted authorities, were in their interest. But they had not the brilliant orators in their ranks who formed the strength of their adversaries; and the support of the people rapidly passed over to the attacking party.[1]

Parties in the Assembly.

Feuillants.

[1] Mig. i. 150, 151. Th. ii. 11, 12, 18.

The Girondists, so called from the district near Bourdeaux, from whence the most able of their party were elected, comprehended the Republicans of the Assembly, and represented that numerous and enthusiastic body in the state who longed after institutions on the model of antiquity. Vergniaud, Guadet, Gensonne, Isnard, and Brissot, formed the splendid leaders of that interest, and from their powers of eloquence, and habits of thought, rapidly rose to celebrity. Brissot was at first the most popular of their leaders, from the influence of his journal, the *Patriot*, where he daily published to France the ideas which his prodigious mental activity had the preceding evening produced in the meetings of the municipality, in the National Assembly, or in the club of the Jacobins. Condorcet exercised the ascendant of a philosophic mind, which gave him nearly the place which Siéyes had held in the Constitutional Assembly; while Pétion, calm and resolute, was the man of action of his party, and rapidly acquired the same dominion in the municipality of Paris, of which he was a member, which Bailly had obtained over the middling classes in the commencement of the Revolution. They flattered themselves that they had preserved republican virtue, because they were neither

Girondists.

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addicted to the frivolities, the expenses, nor the vices of the court; forgetting that the zeal of party, the love of power, and the ambition of popularity, may produce consequences more disastrous, and corruption as great, as the love of pleasure, the thirst of gold, or the ambition of kings. They fell at last under the attacks of a party more revolutionary and less humane than themselves, who, disregarding the graces of composition, and the principles of philosophy, were now assiduously employed in the arts of popularity, and becoming adepts in the infernal means of exciting the multitude.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 151. Dum. 381. Th. ii. 12.

Club of the Jacobins.

The leaders of this latter party in the Assembly were Chabot, Bazire, and Merlin; but it was not there that their real influence lay. The clubs of the Jacobins and the Cordeliers were the pillars of their authority; in the first, Robespierre, Billaud Varrennes, and Collot d'Herbois, ruled with absolute sway; the latter was under the dominion of Danton, Carrier, Desmoulins, and Fabre d'Eglantine. Robespierre was excluded from the Assembly by the self-denying ordinance which he himself had proposed; but he had acquired an omnipotent sway at the Jacobins, by the extravagance of his opinions, the condensed energy of his language, and the reputation of integrity, which had already acquired for him the surname of the Incorruptible. In the Faubourg St Antoine, the Brewer Santerre, well known in the bloodiest days of the Revolution, had obtained an undisputed ascendency; while the municipality of Paris, elected according to the new system, by the universal suffrage of the inhabitants, had fallen, as might have been anticipated, into the hands of the most violent and least respectable of the demagogues.[2] The importance of this body was not at first per-

[2] Mig. i. 152. Th. ii. 13, 15. Toul. ii. 93.

ceived; but possessing, as it did, the means of rousing at pleasure the strength of the capital, it soon acquired a preponderating influence, and was enabled to enthral a government which the armies of Europe sought in vain to subdue. CHAP. V. 1791.

It is admitted by the republican writers, that at this period the King and Queen were sincerely inclined to support the constitution.[1] In truth, Louis had great hopes of its success; and though he was not insensible to its faults, and desired its modification in several particulars, yet he trusted to time, and the returning good sense of the nation, to effect these changes, and was resolved to give it a fair trial. The Queen participated in the same sentiments; and, from the comparative tranquillity of the last year, began to entertain sanguine hopes that the anarchy of the nation might at length be stilled.[2]

[1] Th. ii. 265.

[2] Bertrand de Molleville, vi. 22, *et seq.* Mad. Campan, ii. 261.

The first serious contest of the new Assembly was with the emigrants and the clergy. By one flagrant act of injustice, the Constituent Assembly had left the seeds of eternal discord between the revolutionary party and the Church. The sufferers, naturally, were indefatigable in their endeavours to rouse the people to support their cause. The bishops and priests exerted all their influence to stimulate the country population; and they succeeded, especially in the western provinces, in producing a most powerful sensation. Circular letters were despatched to the curés of the parishes, and instructions generally transmitted to the people. The constitutional clergy were there represented as irregular and unholy; their performance of the sacraments impious and nugatory; marriage by them as nothing but concubinage; Divine vengeance as likely to follow an attendance on their service.[3] Roused by these repre-

Contests with the church. Oct. 6, 1791.

[3] Ferriere, i. 32. Mig. ii. 154. Th. ii. 27.

CHAP. V. 1791. sentations, the rural population in the districts of Calvados, Gevandan, and La Vendée, broke into open disturbances.

Oct. 6. Brissot proposed to take instant and vigorous measures with the dissident clergy and refractory emigrants. "Every method of conciliation," said Isnard, "with these classes, is useless: what effect has followed all your former indulgence towards them? Their audacity has risen in proportion to your forbearance: they will never cease to injure, till they lose the power of doing so. They must either be conquerors, or conquered; matters have fairly come to that; and he must be blind indeed, who does not see it in the clearest light."[1]

[1] Mig. ii. 155. Th. ii. 274.

Debate on the emigrants. "The right of going from one country to another," said Brissot, "is one of the inherent rights of man; but the right ceases when it becomes a crime. Can there be a more flagrant offence than that of emigrating, for the purpose of bringing on our country the horrors of foreign war? What other object have the crowds who now daily leave France? Hear their menaces, examine their conduct, read their libels, and you will see that what they call honour is what the universal voice of mankind has condemned as the height of baseness. Can we be ignorant, that at this moment the cabinets of Europe are besieged by their importunity, and possibly preparing to second their entreaties? Confidence is every day sinking; the rapid fall of the assignats renders nugatory the best laid plans of finance. How is it possible to put a curb on the factions of the interior, when we suffer the emigrants to escape with impunity, who are about to bring the scourge of foreign war upon all our homes?"[2]

[2] Lac. Pr. Hist. i. 266.

The constitutional party could not deny the jus-

tice of these alarms, but they strove to moderate the severity of the measures which were proposed to be adopted against the emigrants. "We are about," said they, "to put the sincerity of the King to too severe a trial, if we require him to adopt measures of severity against his nearest relations. Foreign powers can hardly be convinced that he really enjoys his freedom; and is it by his consenting to such an act that their doubts are to be removed? What will be the effect of the extreme measures which are proposed? Are they likely to calm the passions, soothe the pride, or heal the wounds, which have been inflamed? They will bring back few of the absent, irritate many of the present. Time, distress, the frigid hospitality of strangers, the love of home, a sense of our justice, must be the means of restoring the love of their country in their bosoms; by the proposed measures, you will extinguish it. The Constituent Assembly, more wise than ourselves, beheld with contempt those assemblages of discontented spirits on the frontier, who would be more really formidable, if exercising their spleen at home. A signal of alarm so sounded by us, would excite the jealousy of all the European powers, and really bring on those foreign dangers which would never have arisen from the supplications of our nobility. The pain of confiscation is odious in the most tyrannical states; what must it be considered in a nation exercising the first rights of freedom? Are all the emigrants culpable in an equal degree? How many has fear rendered exiles from their country? Are you now to proclaim to the world, that these fears were well founded, to justify their desertion of France, and to demonstrate to mankind that the picture they have drawn of our government is nowise overcharged? Let us

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rather prove that their calumnies were unfounded, and silence their complaints by pursuing a conduct diametrically opposite to that which they anticipate."[1]

[1] Lac. i. 207.

Decree against the emigrants. Oct. 30, 1791.

The Assembly, influenced by the pressing dangers of emigration, disregarded all these considerations. Two decrees were passed, the first of which commanded the King's brother to return to France, under pain of being held to have abdicated his eventual right to the regency; while the second declared all the French without the kingdom engaged in a conspiracy against the constitution; and subjected all those who should not return before the 1st of January to the penalty of death, and confiscation of their estates, under reservation of the rights of their wives, children, and creditors.[2]

[2] Mig. i. 156. Lac. i. 208. Th. ii. 23, 24.

This proceeding on the part of the French Assembly cannot be better characterised than in the words of the eloquent author of the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, who cannot be suspected of undue prejudice against the Revolution. "Examples of this kind," says Sir James Mackintosh, "are instances of that reckless tyranny which punishes the innocent to make sure of including the guilty, as well as of that refined cruelty which, after rendering home odious, perhaps insupportable, pursues with unrelenting rage such of its victims as fly to foreign lands."[3]

[3] Mackintosh's England, iii. 162.

Debate on the clergy.

The disposal of the refractory clergy was the next object of the Assembly: it excited debates more stormy than those on the emigrants, in proportion as religious rancour is more bitter than civil dissension. "What are you about to do?" exclaimed the advocates of the clergy. "Have you, who have consecrated the freedom of worship, been the first to violate it? The declaration of the rights of man places

it on a basis even more solemn than the constitution; and yet you seriously propose to subvert it? The Constituent Assembly, the author of so much good to France, has left this one schism as a legacy to its successors: close it, for God's sake; but do not widen the breach. To refuse an oath from a sense of duty can never be blamable; to take it from a desire of gain is alone disgraceful. Shall we deprive those, who decline from conscientious scruples, of the slender subsistence which they enjoy? Destroyers of political inequality, shall we re-establish a distinction more odious than any, by crushing to the dust a meritorious class of men? Who shall guarantee ourselves from similar spoliation, if we reduce to beggary the earliest supporters of the Revolution; those who first joined our standard after the immortal oath in the Tennis Court? Beware of driving to desperation a set of men still possessing extensive influence over the rural population. If you are dead to every sentiment of justice, yet pause before you adopt a measure so likely to awaken the flames of civil war in our bosoms." But the days of reason and justice were past. The leaders of the popular party all declared against the priests. Even Condorcet, the advocate of freedom of worship, was the first to support the violent measures proposed against them. It was resolved that all the clergy should be ordained instantly to take the oath to the constitution, under pain of being deprived of their benefices, and declared suspected of treason against the state. They were ordered to be moved from place to place, to prevent their acquiring any influence over their flocks, and imprisoned if they refused to obey. On no account were they to exercise any religious rites in private.[1] Such was the liberty which the Revo-

[1] Th. ii. 28. Lac. i. 209. Mig. ii. 156.

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lution had already bestowed upon France—such its gratitude to its first supporters.

The adoption of these severe and oppressive enactments was signalized by the first open expression of irreligious or atheistical sentiments in the Assembly. "My God is the law—I acknowledge no other," was the expression of one of the opponents of the church. The remonstrance of the constitutional bishops had no effect. These and similar expressions were loudly applauded, and the decree was carried in the midst of tumult and acclamation.[1]

[1] Lac. i. 209. Mig. ii. 156.

King refuses to sanction these decrees.

When these acts were submitted, agreeably to the constitution, to the King for his consideration, he sanctioned the first decree against the emigrants, but put his veto upon the last, and the one against the priests. He had previously and openly censured his brother's desertion of the kingdom, and his disapproval of the general emigration of the noblesse was well known to all parties; but he was unwilling to give his sanction to the extreme measures which were now meditated against them. It was proposed in the council, that to pacify the people, whom it was well known the exercise of the veto would exasperate, the King should dismiss all his religious attendants, excepting those who had taken the oaths to the constitution; but to this Louis, though in general so flexible, opposed an invincible resistance, observing, that it would ill become those who had declared the right of every subject in the realm to liberty of conscience, to deny it to the sovereign alone. In acting thus firmly, he was supported by a large portion of the constitutional party, and by the directory of the department of Paris; and he stood much in need of their adhesion, in thus coming to open rupture with the people and the legislature.[2]

[2] Mig. ii. 157. Th. ii. 30, 31.

The announcement of the King's refusal was received with very different impressions by the different parties in the Assembly. The Republicans could not disguise their satisfaction at a step which promised to embroil him still farther with the nation, and to give to their ambitious projects the weight of popular support. They congratulated the ministers in terms of irony on the decisive proof they had now given of the freedom of the throne. On the following morning a severe proclamation from Louis appeared against the emigrants. The Feuillants animadverted upon it as an unconstitutional stretch of prerogative, the Jacobins as too indulgent in its expressions.[1] Nov. 2.

[1] Lac. i. 211.

The choice of a mayor for the city of Paris shortly after occupied the attention of the capital. La Fayette had retired from the command of the national guard, and was a candidate for that dignity. He was supported by the Constitutionalists, while Pétion, the organ of the now united Girondists and Jacobins, was the favourite of the people. The court, jealous of La Fayette, who had never ceased to be the object of dislike, especially to the Queen, since the 5th October, had the imprudence to throw the weight of the crown into the scale for Pétion, and even to expend large sums of money for that purpose. "M. La Fayette," said the Queen, "aspires to the mayoralty, in the hope of soon becoming a mayor of the palace; Pétion is a Jacobin and a Republican, but he is a fool, incapable of rendering himself the head of a party." Pétion accordingly was elected, and threw the whole weight of his influence into the scale of the Revolution. On such miserable grounds did the court alienate the affections of the friends of a constitutional, and throw offices of trust into the hands of the supporters of a republican government.[2] Election of a Mayor of Paris. Nov. 17, 1791.

[2] Mig. i. 158. i. 94, 95.

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Debate on the foreign powers and the emigrants.

Encouraged by this success, the Republicans openly aspired to still more important powers. The great object of their endeavours was to get the King involved in a foreign war, in the hope, which subsequent events so completely justified, that their cause being identified with that of national independence, would become triumphant. They expressed the utmost satisfaction at the firm tone adopted by the King in the proclamation against the emigrants. "Let us raise ourselves," said Isnard, "on this occasion, to the real dignity of our situation; let us speak to the ministers, to the King, to Europe in arms, with the firmness which becomes us: let us tell the former that we are not satisfied with their conduct; that they must make their election between public gratitude and the vengeance of the laws; and that by vengeance we mean death. Let us tell the King that his interest is to defend the constitution; that he reigns by the people and for the people; that the nation is his sovereign, and that he is the subject of the law. Let us tell Europe, that if the French nation draws the sword it will throw away the scabbard; that it will not again seek it till crowned by the laurels of victory; that if cabinets engage kings in a war against the people, we will rouse the people to mortal strife with sovereigns. Let us tell them, that the combats in which the people engage by order of despots, resemble the strife of two friends under cloud of night, at the instigation of a perfidious emissary; when the dawn appears, and they recognise each other, they throw away their arms, embrace with transport, and turn their vengeance against the author of their discord. Such will be the fate of our enemies, if, at the moment when their armies engage with ours, the light of philosophy strikes their eyes."

Transported by these ideas, the Assembly *unanimously* adopted the proposed measure of addressing the throne. Vaublanc was the organ of their deputation. "No sooner," said he, "did the Assembly cast their eyes on the state of the kingdom, than they perceived that the troubles which agitate it have their source in the criminal preparations of the French emigrants. Their audacity is supported by the German princes, who, forgetting the faith of treaties, openly encourage their armaments, and compel counter-preparations on our part, which absorb the sums destined to the liquidation of the debt. It is your province to put a stop to these evils, and hold to foreign powers the language befitting a King of the French. Tell them, that wherever preparations of war are carried on, there France beholds nothing but enemies; that we will religiously observe peace on our side; that we will respect their laws, their usages, their constitutions; but that if they continue to favour the armaments destined against the French, France will bring into their bosoms not fire and sword, but freedom. It is for them to calculate the consequences of such a wakening of their people." The King promised to take the message of the Assembly into the most serious consideration, and a few days after came in person to the Chamber, and announced that he had notified to the Elector of Treves and the other Electors, that if they did not, before the 15th January, put an end to the military preparations in their states, he would regard them as enemies; and that he had written to the Emperor, to call upon him as the head of the empire, to prevent the disastrous consequences of a war. "If these remonstrances," he concluded, "are not attended to, nothing will remain but to declare war,—a step which

Dec. 1, 1791.

Dec. 14, 1791.

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a people who have renounced the idea of conquest will never take without absolute necessity, but from which a generous and free nation will not shrink when called by the voice of honour and public safety." Loud applauses followed these words; and it was already manifest that the revolutionary energy was turning into its natural channel, warlike achievement.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 162. Th. ii. 38.

Preparations for war.

These declarations were followed by serious preparations. Narbonne, a young and enterprising man of the party of the Feuillants, was appointed minister at war, and immediately set out for the frontiers. One hundred and fifty thousand men were put in immediate requisition, and twenty millions of francs (L.800,000) voted for that purpose. Three armies were organized, one under the command of Rochambeau, one of Luckner, one of La Fayette. The Count d'Artois, and the Prince of Condé, were accused of conspiring against the security of the state and of the constitution, and their estates put under sequestration. Finally, the Count de Provence, afterwards Louis XVIII., not having obeyed the requisition to return to the kingdom within the appointed time, was deprived of his right to the regency.[2]

[2] Mig. i. 162. Lac. i. 217. Th. ii. 39, 40.

The Elector of Treves obeyed the requisition; but the Emperor of Austria, though naturally pacific, and totally unprepared for war, gave orders to his general, the Marshal of Bender, to defend the elector if he was attacked, and insisted that the rights of the feudal lords should be re-established in Alsace. Mean while the imperial troops were put in motion; fifty thousand men were stationed in the Low Countries; six thousand in the Brisgaw; thirty thousand ordered up from Bohemia.[3]

[3] Lac. i. 163. Th. ii. 41.

The Emperor Leopold was extremely averse to a

contest, for which he was unprepared, and which he was well aware was hostile to his interests. His object was to establish a congress, and adjust the disputed points with France in such a manner as might satisfy all parties. He was aware of the necessity of maintaining the constitutional system entire in its material parts, but wished to restore to the throne some of its lost prerogatives, and divide the legislature into two Chambers,—alterations which experience has proved it would have been well for France if she could have imposed on her turbulent and empassioned people.[1]

The Emperor wishes to avoid war.

[1] Bouillé, ii. 299, 309. Th. ii. 41.

Brissot was the decided advocate for war in the Club of the Jacobins; his influence on that subject was long counterbalanced by that of Robespierre, who dreaded above all things the accession of strength which his political opponents might receive from the command of the armies. "Beware," said he, in the Jacobin Club, "you who have so long guarded against the perfidy of the court, of now becoming the unconscious instruments of its designs. Brissot is clear for war; I ask you where are your armies, your fortresses, your magazines? What! shall we believe that the court, which, in periods of tranquillity, is incessantly engaged in intrigues, will abstain from them when it obtains the lead of our armies? I see clearly the signs of perfidy, not only in those who are to proclaim war, but in those who advise it. Every one must perceive, that the efforts of the emigrants to rouse foreign powers are utterly nugatory. Are you to be the party, by a hasty measure, to compel them to adopt vigorous steps? I affirm, without the fear of contradiction, that the blood of our soldiers is sold by traitors. The more I meditate on the chances of war, the more my mind is filled with the most gloomy presages. Already I see the men,

Opposed by Robespierre.

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who basely shed the blood of our fellow-citizens on the Champ de Mars, at the head of the armies. What guarantee am I offered against such appalling dangers? The patriotism of Brissot and Condorcet! I know not if it is true; I know not if it is sincere; but I know well that it is tardy. I have seen them worship M. La Fayette; they made a show of resistance at the time of his odious success; but they have since upheld his fortunes, and evinced but too plainly that they were participant in his designs against the public weal." [1]

[1] Lac. i. 216, 217. Th. ii. 47, 49.

Change of Ministry.

While these divisions were going on among the revolutionary party, the ministers of the King were daily declining in influence. Divided among themselves, they were unable to withstand the incessant attacks of the Assembly and the patriot clubs. The one-half, led by Delessart and Bertrand de Molleville, were inclined to the aristocratic; the other, headed by Narbonne and Cahier de Gerville, to the democratic side. Sensible of the weakness of their adversaries, the popular leaders in the Assembly pushed their advantages, and preferred an accusation against the two former of the Ministry. Though they were baffled for some time by the ability and presence of mind of Bertrand de Molleville, yet at length the King was obliged to yield, and make a total change in his councils.[2]

[2] Mig. i. 164. Lac. i. 218, 219.

The principle adopted in the formation of the new Ministry was the same as that acted on in similar extremities by Charles I., to divide the opposition, by the selection of the least intemperate of its members. Roland was made minister of the interior; Dumourier received the portfolio of foreign affairs; Lacoste, Clavière, Duranthon, and Servan, were severally appointed to the marine, the finances, the judicatory, and war.[3]

[3] Mig. i. 164. Lac. i. 224. Th. ii. 57, 58.

Dumourier was forty-seven years of age when he was called to this important situation. He had many of the qualities of a great man: abilities; an enterprising character; indefatigable activity; impetuosity of disposition; confidence in his own fortune; a steady and rapid *coup d'œil.* Fertile in resources, pliant in temper, engaging in conversation, unbounded in ambition, he was eminently qualified to rise to distinction in periods of civil commotion. But these great mental powers were counterbalanced by others of an opposite tendency. A courtier before 1789, a constitutionalist under the first Assembly, a Girondist under the second, he seemed inclined to change with every wind that blew, in the constant desire to raise himself to the head of affairs. Volatile, fickle, inconsiderate, he adopted measures too hastily to ensure success; veering with all the changes of the times, he wanted the ascendant of a powerful, and the weight of a virtuous character. Had he possessed with his own genius the firmness of Bouillé, the passions of Mirabeau, or the dogmatism of Robespierre, he might for a time have ruled the Revolution. An admirable partisan, he was a feeble leader of a party; well qualified to play the part of Antony, or Alcibiades, he was unfit to follow the steps of Cæsar or Cromwell.[1]

Character of Dumourier.

[1] Mig. i. 164. Lac. i. 224. Th. ii. 59.

Austere in character, simple in manners, firm in principle, Roland was in every respect the reverse of Dumourier. His disposition had nothing in common with the age in which he lived; he brought to the government of France, in the eighteenth century, the integrity and simplicity of the Sabine Farm. A steady republican, he was well qualified for a quiescent, but ill for an incipient state of freedom; uncompromising in his principles, unostentatious in his manners, unambitious in his inclination, he would

Of M. and Madame Roland.

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probably never have emerged from the seclusion of private life, but for the splendid abilities, and brilliant character of his wife. Empassioned in disposition, captivating in manner, unrivalled in conversation, this remarkable woman united the graces of the French to the elevation of the Roman character. Born in the middling ranks, her manners, though without the ease of dignified birth, yet conferred distinction on an elevated station; surrounded by the most fascinating society in France, she preserved unsullied the simplicity of domestic life. She had as much virtue as pride, as much ambition as private worth. Her sensitive temperament could not endure the constant attacks made on her husband at the tribune, and she replied, perhaps with undue warmth, in articles in pamphlets and public journals which bore her husband's name. An ardent admirer of antiquity, she wept, while yet in infancy, that she was not born a Roman citizen. She lived to witness misfortunes greater than were known to ancient states, and to bear them with more than Roman constancy.[1]*

[1] Roland's Memoirs, i. 32. Mig. i. 165. Th. ii. 63, 64. Lac. i. 225. Hist. de la Conv. i. 38.

The court named the new Ministry, "Le Ministère sans Culottes." The first time that Roland presented himself at the palace, he was dressed with strings in his shoes, and a round hat. The master of the ceremonies refused to admit him in such an unwonted costume, not knowing who he was; but being afterwards informed, and in consequence obliged to do so, he turned to Dumourier, and said with a sigh, "Ah, sir, no buckles in his shoes!"—"All is lost!" replied the minister of foreign affairs, with sarcastic irony.[2]

[2] Mig. i. 166. Th. ii. 65.

* She was, however, too active and enterprising for a statesman's wife. "When I wish to see the minister of the interior," said Condorcet, "I can never get a glimpse of any thing but the petticoats of his wife."—*Hist. de la Convention*, i. 38.

The first duty of the new Ministry was to prepare for a war. The situation of foreign affairs became daily more menacing. The aged and pacific Leopold was just dead; and his successor, Francis II., young and inexperienced, was not likely to be influenced by his circumspection. Austria was collecting her troops, and placing garrisons in situations calculated to menace the district of the Jura; the assemblage of emigrants at Coblentz had been renewed with more vigour than ever; and military preparations, though on a limited scale, were going forward in the Low Countries. The ultimatum on which Austria agreed to discontinue her preparations, was the re-establishment of the monarchy on the footing on which it was put by the declaration of 23d June, 1789; the restitution of their property to the clergy; the cession of Alsace, with all its seignorial rights, to the German Princes, and of Avignon to the Pope. These terms were deemed wholly inadmissible by the revolutionary leaders, and it was evident to all parties that a contest was inevitable.[1]

March 17, 1792. State of foreign affairs.

[1] Mig. ii. 167. Lac. i. 226. Th. ii. 70, 72.

All classes in France were equally anxious for war. The Royalists hoped every thing from the invasion of the German powers; the superiority of their discipline, the number of their armies, led them to anticipate an immediate march to Paris, and the final extinction of the revolutionary mania, from which they had suffered so much. The Constitutionalists, worn out with the painful struggle they had so long maintained with their domestic enemies, expected to regain their ascendency by the influence of the army, and the experienced necessity of military discipline. The Democrats eagerly desired the excitation and tumult of campaigns, from all the chances of which they hoped to derive advantage;

War desired by all parties in France.

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victorious, they looked to the establishment of their principles in foreign states; vanquished, they anticipated the downfall of the constitutionalists, and their own installation in their stead.[1]

[1] Lac. i. 228. Th. 47, 49.

Pressed alike by his friends, his ministers, and his enemies, Louis was at length compelled to take the fatal step. On the 20th April, he repaired to the Assembly, and after a long exposition by Dumourier, of the grounds of complaint against Austria; the secret tenor of the conferences of Mantua, Reichenback, and Pilnitz; the coalition of kings, formed to arrest the progress of the Revolution; the open protection given to the troops of the emigrants; and the intolerable conditions of the ultimatum; pronounced, with a tremulous voice, these irrevocable words:—"You have heard, gentlemen, the result of my negotiations with the court of Vienna: they are conformable to the sentiments more than once expressed to me by the National Assembly, and confirmed by the great majority of the kingdom. All prefer a war, to the continuance of outrages to the national honour, or menaces to the national safety. I have exhausted all the means of pacification in my power; I now come, in terms of the constitution, to propose to the Assembly, that we should declare war against the King of Hungary and Bohemia." This declaration was received in silence, interrupted only by partial applause. How unanimous soever the members were in approving the declaration of the King, they were too deeply impressed with the solemnity and grandeur of the occasion, to give vent to any noisy ebullition of feeling. In the evening, on a meeting specially convened for the occasion, war was almost unanimously agreed to.[2]

20th April, 1792.

The King yields against his own judgment.

[2] Mig. i. 168. Lac. ii. 228. Th. ii. 75, 76.

A large proportion of the most enlightened men

in the Assembly, including Condorcet, Clavière, Roland, and De Graves, disapproved of this step, and yet voted for it—a striking proof of the manner in which, in troubled times, the more moderate and rational party are swept along by the daring measures of more vehement and reckless men.[1]

[1] Dumont, 418.

The King was well aware that the interests of his family could not be benefited, but necessarily must be injured by the events of the war, whatever they might be; if victorious, the people would be more imperious in their demands, and more difficult for the crown to govern; vanquished, he would be accused of treachery, and made to bear the load of public indignation. So strongly was he impressed by these considerations, and so thoroughly convinced that his conduct in agreeing to this war might hereafter be made the subject of accusation at the trial which he was well aware was approaching, that he drew up a record of the proceedings of the council, where he delivered his opinions against the war, and after getting it signed by all the ministers, deposited it in the iron closet which about this time he had secretly made in the wall of his apartments in the Tuileries, to contain the most important papers in his possession, both those calculated to found a charge against him, and support his defence when brought to trial. The closet, with its contents, was afterwards betrayed by the treachery of the blacksmith who was employed to make it.[2]

[2] M. Campan, ii. 222. Th. ii. 73.

Thus commenced the greatest, the most bloody, and the most interesting war, which has agitated mankind since the fall of the Roman empire. Rising from feeble beginnings, it at length involved the world in its conflagration; involving the interests, and rousing the passions of every class of the people,

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it brought unheard-of armies into the field, and was carried on with a degree of exasperation unknown in civilized times. But from this strife of principle, as well as interest, the fair fabric of civil liberty is destined, let us hope, at length to emerge, if not in the country where it arose, at least elsewhere in the world; and in the efforts both of sovereigns to crush and demagogues to madden its spirit, are to be found the means by which wisdom is taught and moderation finally impressed upon the masses of the people, and a better temper induced by the sufferings than can ever arise from the unbroken prosperity of mankind.

The intelligence of the declaration of war was received with joy by all France, and by none more so than by those districts which were destined to suffer most from its ultimate effects. The Jacobins beheld in it the termination of their apprehensions occasioned by the emigrants, and the uncertain conduct of the King. The Constitutionalists hoped that the common danger would unite all the factions which now distracted the commonwealth, while the field of battle would mow down the turbulent characters whom the Revolution had brought forth. A few of the Feuillants only reproached the Assembly with having violated the constitution, and begun a war of aggression, which could not fail in the end to terminate fatally for France.[1]

[1] Th. ii. 77.

It communicated a new impulse to the public mind, already so strongly excited. The districts, the municipalities, and the clubs, wrote addresses to the Assembly, congratulating them on having vindicated the national honour; arms were prepared, pikes forged, gifts provided, and the nation seemed impatient only to receive its invaders. But the efforts

of patriotism, strong as an auxiliary to a military force, are seldom able to supply its place. The first combats were all unsuccessful to the French arms; and, it will more than once appear in the sequel, that had the allies acted with more decision, and pressed on to Paris before military experience had been superadded to the enthusiasm of their adversaries, there can be no doubt that the war might have been terminated in a single campaign.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 169. Toul. ii. 121. Th. ii. 79.

Two events occupied the attention of the Assembly about this time in different quarters, which evinced the perilous nature of the principles which were now promulgated from the French capital.

The first of these was the massacre of Avignon. This city had been the theatre of bloody events ever since the period of its union with France. This encroachment upon the rights of the Holy See, had been consented to with extreme reluctance by Louis, and never thoroughly acquiesced in by the inhabitants. Two parties, one favourable, the other opposed to the incorporation, divided the city. The latter had murdered Lecuyer, secretary to the municipality, at the foot of the altar, whither he had fled for refuge. The revenge of the popular party was slow, but not the less atrocious. In silence they collected their forces, and at length, when all assistance was absent, surrounded the city. The gates were closed, the walls guarded so as to render escape impossible, and a band of assassins sought out in their own houses the individuals destined for death. Sixty unhappy wretches were speedily thrust into prison, where, during the obscurity of night, the murderers wreaked their vengeance with impunity. One young man put fourteen to death with his own hand, and at length only desisted from excess of fatigue: the father was

Massacre of Avignon.

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brought to witness the massacre of his children, the children of the father, to aggravate their sufferings; twelve women perished after having undergone tortures worse than death itself; an old priest, remarkable for a life of beneficence, who had escaped, was pursued, and sacrificed by the objects of his bounty. When vengeance had done its worst, the remains of the victims were torn and mutilated, and heaped up in a ditch, or thrown into the Rhone.[1]

[1] Lac. i. 213. Toul. ii 97.

The recital of these atrocities excited the utmost commiseration in the Assembly. Cries of indignation arose on all sides; the President fainted after reading the letter which communicated its details. But this, like almost all the other crimes of the popular party during the progress of the Revolution, remained unpunished. The Legislature, after some delay, felt it necessary to proclaim an amnesty, and some of the authors of this massacre afterwards fell the victims, on 31st May, of the sanguinary passions of which they had given so cruel an example. In a revolution, the ruling power, themselves supported by the populace, can seldom punish their excesses; the period of reaction must be waited for before it can in general be attempted.[2]

[2] Lac. i. 213.

Dreadful insurrection of St Domingo.

The second catastrophe, more extensive in its operation, yet more terrible in its details, was the revolt of St Domingo. The slaves in that flourishing colony, agitated by the intelligence which they received of the levelling principles of the Constituent Assembly, had early manifested symptoms of insubordination. The Assembly, divided between the desire of enfranchising so large a body of men, and the evident dangers of such a step, had long hesitated on the course they should adopt, and were inclined to support the rights of the planters. But the pas-

sions of the Negroes were excited by the efforts of a society, styled "The Society of Friends of the Blacks," of which Brissot was the leading member; and the mulattoes were induced by their injudicious advice to organize an insurrection. They trusted that they would be able to control the ferocity of the slaves even during the heats of a revolt; they little knew the dissimulation and cruelty of the savage character. An universal revolt was planned and organized, without the slightest suspicion on the part of the planters, and the same night fixed on for its breaking out over the whole island.[1]

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[1] Toul. ii. 98. Lac. i. 214.

At length, at midnight, on the 30th October, the insurrection broke forth. In an instant twelve hundred coffee, and two hundred sugar plantations, were in flames; the buildings, the machinery, the farm-offices, reduced to ashes, the unfortunate proprietors hunted down, murdered, or thrown into the flames by the infuriated Negroes. The horrors of a servile war universally appeared. The unchained African signalized his ingenuity by the discovery of new and unheard-of modes of torture. An unhappy planter was sawed asunder between two boards; the horrors inflicted on the women exceeded any thing known even in the annals of Christian ferocity. The indulgent master was sacrificed equally with the inhumane; on all alike, young and old, rich and poor, the wrongs of an oppressed race were indiscriminately wreaked. Crowds of slaves traversed the country with the heads of the white children affixed on their pikes; they served as the standards of these furious assemblages.[2] In a few instances only, the humanity of the Negro character resisted the savage contagion of the time; and some faithful slaves, at the hazard of their own lives, fed in caves their masters or

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[2] Lac. i. 214. Toul ii. 98.

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their children, whom they had rescued from destruction.

The intelligence of these disasters excited an angry discussion in the Assembly. Brissot, the most vehement opponent of slavery, ascribed them all to the refusal of the blessings of freedom to the Negroes; the moderate members, to the inflammatory addresses circulated among them by the Anti-Slavery Society of Paris. At length it was agreed to concede the political rights for which they contended to the men of colour; and in consequence of that resolution, St Domingo obtained the nominal blessings of freedom.[1] But it is not thus that the great changes of nature are conducted; a child does not acquire the strength of manhood in an hour, or a tree the consistency of the hardy denizens of the forest in a season. The hasty philanthropists who conferred upon an ignorant slave population the precipitate gift of freedom, did them a greater injury than their worst enemies. The black population remain to this day, in St Domingo, a memorable example of the ruinous effect of precipitate emancipation. Without the steady habits of civilized society; ignorant of the wants which reconcile to a life of labour; destitute of the support which a regular government might have afforded, they have brought to the duties of cultivated the habits of savage life. To the indolence of the Negro character they have joined the vices of European corruption; profligate, idle, and disorderly, they have declined both in numbers and in happiness; from being the greatest sugar plantation in the world, the island has been reduced to the necessity of importing that valuable produce; and the inhabitants, naked and voluptuous, are fast receding into the state of nature from which their ancestors were

[1] Lac. i. 215. Toul. ii. 98.

torn, two centuries ago, by the rapacity of Christian avarice.* CHAP. V. 1792.

Mean while the disasters of the armies, the natural effect of thirty years' unbroken continental peace, and recent license and insubordination, produced the utmost consternation in Paris. The power of the Jacobins was rapidly increasing; their affiliated societies were daily extending their ramifications throughout France, and the debates of the parent club shook the kingdom from one end to another. They accused the Royalists of having occasioned the defeats, by raising treasonable cries of *Sauve qui peut;* the Aristocrats could not dissemble their joy at events which promised shortly to bring the allied armies to Paris, and restore the ancient *régime;* the generals attributed their disasters to Dumourier, who had planned the campaign; he ascribed every thing to the defective mode in which his orders had been executed. Distrust and recrimination universally prevailed.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 171. Toul. ii. 121. Lac. i. 233. Th. ii. 80, 81.

In this extremity, the Assembly took the most energetic measures for ensuring their own authority and the public safety. They declared their sittings permanent, disbanded the guard of the King, which had excited the popular jealousy, and passed a decree condemning the refractory clergy to exile. To secure the capital from insult, they directed the formation of a camp of 20,000 men near Paris, and sought to maintain the enthusiasm of the people by Revolutionary *fêtes*, and increase their efficiency by arming them with pikes. The disbanding of the Royal

Royal Guard disbanded.

* The details of this dreadful insurrection, with a full account of the subsequent history of St Domingo, will be given in a succeeding chapter, which treats of the expedition of Napoleon to that island. It is not the least important period of the eventful era. Vide, *infra*, Chap. xxxvii.

CHAP. V. 1792. Guard was carried only by a small majority, and in spite of the most violent opposition. "The veil," said Gerardin, "is now withdrawn; the insurrection against the throne is no longer disguised. We are called on, in a period of acknowledged public danger, to remove the last constitutional protection from the crown. Why are we always told of the dangers to be apprehended from the royalist faction? a party weak in numbers, despicable in influence, whom it would be so easy to subdue. I see two factions, and a double set of dangers, and one advances by hasty strides to a regicide government. Would to God my anticipations may prove unfounded! But I cannot shut my eyes to the striking analogy of the two countries: I cannot forget that in a similar crisis the Long Parliament disbanded the guard of Charles I. What fate awaited that unhappy monarch? What now awaits the constitutional sovereign of the French?"[1]

[1] Lac. i. 234. Mig. i. 172.

The Royal Guard was remodelled after its dissolution; the officers in part chosen from a different class, the staff put into different hands, and companies of pikemen introduced from the faubourgs to neutralize the loyalty of their fellow-soldiers. The constitutional party made the most vigorous remonstrances against these hazardous innovations. But their efforts were vain: the approach of danger and the public agitation had thrown the whole weight of government into the hands of the Jacobins.[2]

[2] Mig. i. 172. Th. ii. 87.

The evident peril of his situation roused the pacific King into more than usual vigour. His ministers were incessantly urging him to give his sanction to the decree of exile against the non-juring priests, and to admit the constitutional clergy free access to his person, in order to remove all ground for complaint

on the score of religion. But on these points Louis was immovable. Indifferent to personal danger, comparatively insensible to the diminution of the royal prerogative, he was resolutely determined to make no compromise with his religious duties. By degrees he became estranged from the party of the Gironde, and remained several days without addressing them, or letting them know his determination in that particular. It was then that Madame Roland wrote, in name of her husband, the famous letter to the King, in which she strongly urged him to become with sincerity a constitutional monarch, and put an end to the public troubles, by sanctioning the decrees against the priests. This letter, written with much eloquence, but in too republican a spirit, excited the anger of Louis, and Servan, Roland, and Clavière, were dismissed with marked expressions of dissatisfaction.[1]

June 10.

[1] Mig. i. 173. Lac. i. 239.

Dumourier endeavoured to take advantage of these events to elevate his own power in the administration. He consented to remain in the Ministry, and separate himself from his friends, on condition that the King should sanction the decree against the priests. But Louis persisted in his refusal to ratify these decrees, or the formation of a camp of 20,000 men at Paris. "You should have thought," said Dumourier, "of these objections, before you agreed to the first decree of the Constituent Assembly, which enjoined the clergy to take the oaths."—"I was wrong then," answered the King; "I will not commit such an error on a second occasion." Dumourier, after having lost the confidence of his party, found himself compelled to set out for the army, where he soon acquired a more lasting reputation as a general.[2] The Assembly broke into the most furious invectives

June 12, 1792.

[2] Lac. i. 240. Mig. i. 173. Th. ii. 103, 104.

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against the court, upon the dismissal of the popular ministers, and declared that they carried with them the regrets of the nation.

New Ministry from the Feuillants.

The new Ministry were chosen from among the Feuillants. Scipion Chambonnas and Terrier Montiel were appointed to the foreign affairs and the finances; but they were without consideration either with their party or the country. The crown lost the support of the only men in France who were sincere in their belief that they would advance the cause of freedom by means of the Revolution, at the very moment that its most violent excesses were about to break out. The King was so much disconcerted at the proved impossibility of forming an efficient administration, that he fell into a state of mental depression, which he had never experienced since the commencement of the public disturbances. For ten days together he hardly articulated a word, and seemed so completely overwhelmed, as to have lost almost the physical power of motion. The Queen, whose energy nothing could subdue, at length extricated him from that deplorable state, by throwing herself at his feet, and conjuring him, by the duty he owed to her and their children, to summon up more resolution; and if death was unavoidable, to perish with honour, combating for their rights, rather than remain to be stifled within the walls of the palace.[1]

[1] Madame Campan, ii. 205. Lac. i. 240. Mig. i. 174.

But if this heroic princess thus exerted herself to rouse the spirit of the King, it was not because she was either ignorant of, or insensible to, the dangers which surrounded her. In the palace of the Tuileries, where she was virtually confined as a prisoner, the cannoneers of the guard openly insulted her when she appeared at the windows, and expressed in the most brutal language their desire to see her head on

the point of their bayonets. The gardens of the palace were the scenes of every species of disorder. In one quarter a popular orator was to be seen pouring forth treason and sedition to an enraptured audience; in another, an ecclesiastic was thrown down, and beaten with merciless severity; while the people, with thoughtless confidence, pursued their walks round the marbled parterres, as if they had no interest in the insults which were levelled at religion and the throne.[1]

[1] Dumont, iii. 6.

The King at this time had opened a secret correspondence with the Allied Courts, in the view of directing and moderating their measures in advancing for his deliverance. For this purpose he had despatched M. Mallet du Pan to Vienna, with instructions written with his own hand, in which he recommended that they should advance into the French territory with the utmost caution, show every indulgence to the inhabitants, and cause their march to be preceded by a manifesto, in which they should avow the most moderate and conciliatory dispositions. The original document remains a precious monument of the wisdom and patriotic spirit of that unhappy sovereign. It is remarkable that he recommends, in order to separate the ruling faction of the Jacobins from the nation, exactly the same language and conduct which was throughout the whole period strenuously recommended by Mr Burke, and was twenty years afterwards employed with so much success by the Emperor Alexander and the allied sovereigns, to detach the French people from the standards of Napoleon.[2] *

[2] Bertrand de Molleville, viii. 38, 39. Th. ii. 109.

* The King recommended that the Emperor and King of Prussia should publish a proclamation, in which they should declare, "that they were obliged to take up arms to resist the aggression made upon them

CHAP. V. 1792. Alarmed at the evident danger of the monarchy, the friends of the constitution used the most vigorous means to repress the growing spirit of insubordination, and support the throne. Lally Tollendal and Malouet, of the ancient monarchical party, united with the leaders of the Feuillants, Duport, Lameth, and Barnave, for this purpose. La Fayette, who was employed on the frontier at the head of the army, employed his immense influence for the same object. June 16. From the camp at Maubeuge, he wrote, on the 16th June, an energetic letter to the Assembly, in which he denounced the Jacobin faction, demanded the dis-

which they ascribed neither to the King nor the nation, but to the criminal faction which domineered alike over the one and the other: that in consequence, far from departing from the friendly feelings which they entertained towards the King of France, their Majesties had taken up arms only to deliver him and the nation from an atrocious tyranny, which equally oppressed both, and to enable them to re-establish freedom upon a secure foundation: that they had no intentions of intermeddling in any form with the internal government of the nation, but only desired to restore to it the power of choosing that which really was in accordance with the wishes of the great majority: that they had no thoughts whatever of foreign conquest: that individual should be not less protected than national property: that their Majesties took under their especial safeguard all faithful and peaceable citizens, and declared war only against those who now ruled with a rod of iron all who aimed at the establishment of freedom." In pursuance of these principles, he besought the emigrants to take no part in the war; to avoid every thing which could give it the appearance of a contest between one nation and another; and urged the allies to appear as parties, not arbiters, in the contest between the crown and the people; warning them that any other conduct "would infallibly endanger the lives of the King and royal family, overturn the throne, lead to the massacre of the Royalists; rally to the Jacobins all the Revolutionists, who were daily becoming more alienated from them, revive an excitation which was fast declining, and render more obstinate a national resistance, which would yield at the first reverse, if the nation was only convinced that the fate of the Revolution was not wound up in the destruction of those who had hitherto been its victims." This holograph document was dated in June, 1792, two months before the 10th August. There is not a more striking monument of political wisdom and foresight on record in modern times.—See BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE, viii. 37–39.

solution of the Clubs, the emancipation and establishment of a constitutional throne, and conjured the Assembly, in the name of itself, of the army, and of all the friends of liberty, to confine themselves to strictly legal measures. This letter had the success which may be anticipated for all attempts to control a revolution by those who have been instrumental in producing it; it excited the most violent dissatisfaction, destroyed the popularity of the writer, and was totally nugatory in calming the populace.[1]

[1] Lac. i. 240. Mig. i. 175. Th. ii. 116.

The Girondists, chagrined at the loss of their places in the Administration, proceeded to the most ruinous excesses. They experienced now that cruel necessity to which all who seek to rise by the passions of the people are sooner or later subjected, that of submitting to the vices, and allying themselves with the brutality, of the mob. They openly associated with, and flattered men of the most revolting habits and disgusting vulgarity, and commenced that system of revolutionary equality which was so soon to banish politeness, humanity, and every gentler virtue from French society.[2] They resolved to rouse the people by inflammatory petitions and harangues, and hoped to intimidate the court by the show of popular resistance,—a dangerous expedient, and which in the end proved as fatal to them as to the power against which it was directed. A general insurrection, under their guidance, was prepared in the faubourgs, and, under pretence of celebrating the anniversary of the Tennis Court Oath, which was approaching, a body of ten thousand men was organized in the quarter of St Antoine. Thus, while the Royalists were urging the approach of the European powers,[3] the patriots were rousing the insurrection of the people. Both produced their natural

The Girondists plan a revolt of the populace.

[2] Dumont, 388.

[3] Mig. i. 175. Th. ii. 124.

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effects—the Reign of Terror, and the despotism of Napoleon.

Disgraceful tumult on the 20th June.

On the 20th June, a tumultuous body, ten thousand strong, secretly organized by Pétion, Mayor of Paris, and the practical leader of the Girondists, set out from the Faubourg St Antoine, and directed itself towards the Assembly. It was the first attempt to overawe the legislature by the display of mere brute force. The deputation was introduced into the hall, while the doors were besieged by a clamorous multitude. They spoke in the most violent and menacing manner, declaring that they were resolved to avail themselves of the means of resistance in their power, and which were recognised in the Declaration of Rights. The petition declared,—"The people are ready; they are fully prepared to have recourse to any measures to put in force the second article of the Rights of Man, resistance to oppression. Let the small minority of your body, who do not participate in their sentiments, deliver the earth from their presence, and retire to Coblentz. Examine the causes of our sufferings: If they flow from the royal authority, let it be annihilated. The executive power," it concluded, "is at variance with you. We desire no other proof than the dismissal of the popular ministers. Does the happiness of the people then depend on the caprice of the sovereign? Should that sovereign have any other law than the will of the people? The people are determined, and their pleasure outweighs the wishes of crowned heads. They are the oak of the forest; the royal sapling must bend beneath its branches. We complain of the inactivity of our armies; we call upon you to investigate its causes; if it arises from the executive power, that it be instantly annihilated."[1]

[1] Mig. i. 176.

This revolutionary harangue was supported by the authors of the movement in the Assembly. Guadet, a popular leader of the Gironde, exclaimed, "Who will dare now to renew the bloody scene, when, at the close of the Constituent Assembly, thousands of our fellow-citizens were slaughtered in the Champ de Mars, around the altar of France, where they were renewing the most sacred of oaths? If the people are violently alarmed, is it the part of their mandatories to refuse to hear them? Are not the grievances we have just heard re-echoed from one end of France to the other? Is this the first time that in Paris the conduct of the King, and the perfidy of his councils, have excited the public indignation? You have heard the petitioners express themselves with candour, but with the firmness which becomes a free people."[1] It was thus that the Girondists encouraged the populace in their attempts to intimidate the government;—before a year had expired, on the same spot they fell a victim to the violence which they now excited.

[1] Lac. i. 242.

Overawed by the danger of their situation, the Assembly received the petition with indulgence, and permitted the mob to defile before them. A motley assemblage, now swelled to 30,000 persons, men, women, and children, in the most squalid attire, immediately passed through the hall, uttering furious cries, and displaying seditious banners. They were headed by Santerre, and the Marquis de Saint Huruques, with a drawn sabre in his hand. Immense tablets were borne aloft, having inscribed on them the Rights of Man; others carried banners, bearing, as inscriptions, "The Constitution, or Death!" —"Long live the Sansculottes!" At the end of one pike was placed a bleeding heart, with the inscription around it, "The Heart of the Aristocracy." Mul-

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titudes of men and women, shaking alternately pikes and olive branches above their heads, danced round these frightful emblems, singing the revolutionary song of *Ca Ira*. In the midst of these furies, dense columns of insurgents defiled, bearing the more formidable weapons of fusils, sabres, and daggers, raised aloft on poles. The loud applause of the galleries, the cries of the mob, the deathlike silence of the Assembly, who trembled at the sight of the auxiliaries they had invoked, formed a scene which exceeds all description. The passage of the procession lasted three hours. After leaving the Assembly, they proceeded in a tumultuous mass to the palace.[1]

[1] Lac. i. 243. Mig. i. 177. Th. ii. 133, 135.

The palace invaded by the multitude.

The outer gates were left open by order of the King. The multitude immediately broke into the gardens, ascended the staircase, and entered the royal apartments. Louis appeared before them with a few attendants. Those in front, overawed by the dignity of his presence, made an involuntary pause, but, pressed on by the crowd behind, soon surrounded the monarch. With difficulty his attendants got him withdrawn into the embrasure of a window, while the crowd rolled on through the other rooms of the palace. Seated on a chair which was elevated on a table, and surrounded by a few faithful national guards, who kept off the most unruly of the populace, he preserved a serene and undaunted countenance in the midst of dangers, which every instant threatened his life. Never did he appear more truly great than on that trying occasion. To the reiterated demand that he should instantly ratify the decrees against the priests, and sanction the establishment of a camp near Paris, he constantly replied, "This is neither the time nor the way to obtain it of me." A drunken workman handed him the red cap of liberty;[2] with a mild aspect he put the revolutionary emblem

[2] Lac. i. 244. Mig. i. 178. Th. ii. 138, 139, 140.

on the head on which a diadem was wont to rest. Another presented him with a cup of water; though he had long suspected poison, he drank it off in the midst of applauses, involuntarily extorted from the multitude.

Informed of the danger of the King, a deputation of the Assembly, headed by Vergniaud and Isnard, repaired to the palace. With difficulty they penetrated through the crowds which filled its apartments, and found the King seated in the same place, unshaken in courage, but almost exhausted by fatigue. One of the national guard approached him to assure him of his devotion. "Feel," said he, placing his hand on his bosom, "whether this is the beating of a heart agitated by fear?" Vergniaud, however, was not without disquietude from the menaces which he had heard in the remoter parts of the crowd. At length he succeeded in obtaining a hearing, and persuaded the people to depart. He was seconded by Pétion, and the mob gradually withdrew. By eight o'clock in the evening they had all withdrawn, and silence and astonishment reigned in the palace.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 178. Lac. i. 244. Th. ii. 141, 142.

During the terrors of this agitating day, the Queen and the Princesses displayed the most heroic presence of mind. As they were retiring before the furious multitude, the Princess Elizabeth was mistaken for the Queen, and loaded with maledictions. She forbade her attendants to explain the mistake, happy to draw upon herself the perils and opprobrium of her august relative. Santerre shortly after approached, and assured her she had nothing to fear; that the people were come to warn, but not to strike.[2] He handed her a red cap, which she put on the head of the Dauphin. The Princess Royal, a few years older, was weeping at the side of the Queen; but the in-

[2] Mig. i. 178. Lac. i. 241. Th. ii. 140, 141.

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fant, with the innocence of childhood, smiled at the scene by which he was surrounded.

First appearance of Napoleon.

A young officer, with his college companion, was a witness from the gardens of the Tuileries of this disgraceful scene. He expressed great regret at the conduct of the populace, and the imbecility of the Ministry; but when the King appeared at the window with the cap of liberty on his head, he could no longer restrain his indignation. "The wretches!" he exclaimed; "they should cut down the first five hundred with grape-shot, and the remainder would soon take to flight." He lived to put his principles in practice on the same spot—his name will never be forgotten: it was NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.[1]

[1] Bour. i. 73.

Indignation of France at this event.

The events of the 20th June excited the utmost indignation throughout France. The violence of their proceedings, the violation of the Assembly, of the royal residence, the illegality of a petition, supported by a tumultuous and disorderly rabble, were made the object of warm reproaches to the popular party. The Duke de la Rochefoucault, who commanded at Rouen, offered the King an asylum in the midst of his army; La Fayette urged him to proceed to Compeigne, and throw himself into the arms of the constitutional forces; the national guard offered to form a corps to defend his person; but Louis declined all these offers. He hoped for deliverance from the allied powers, and was unwilling to compromise himself by openly joining the constitutional party. The Girondists never recovered the failure of this insurrection. They lost the support of the one party by having attempted, of the other, by having failed in it.[2]

[2] Lac. i. 246: Mig. i. 178. Th. ii. 144.

A petition, signed by twenty thousand respectable persons in Paris, was soon after presented to the

Assembly, praying them to punish the authors of the late disorders; but such was the terror of that body, that they were incapable of taking any decisive steps. The conduct of the King excited general admiration: The remarkable coolness in danger which he had evinced extorted the applause even of his enemies, and the unhappy irresolution of his earlier years was forgotten in the intrepidity of his present demeanour. Had he possessed vigour enough to avail himself of the powerful reaction in his favour, which these events excited, he might still have arrested the Revolution; but his was the passive courage which could endure, not the active spirit fitted to prevent danger.[1]

[1] Dumont, 343. Jom. ii. 53. Th. ii. 148, 149.

La Fayette made a last effort to raise from the dust the constitutional throne: Having provided for the command of the army, and obtained addresses from the soldiers against the recent excesses, he set out for Paris, and presented himself, on the 28th June, unexpectedly at the bar of the Assembly. He demanded, in the name of his troops and of himself, that the authors of the revolt should be punished; that vigorous measures should be taken to destroy the Jacobin sect. His speech was loudly applauded by the Royalists, and excited the utmost dismay in the revolutionary party. They dreaded the promptitude and vigour of their adversary in the Champ de Mars. A feeble majority was obtained by the constitutional party in the Assembly, upon a motion to enquire into and punish the authors of the late disorders. Encouraged by this success, slight as it was, the general next presented himself to the court. He was coolly received by the King, and with difficulty succeeded in obtaining a review of the national guard. The leaders of the Royalists anxiously en-

June 28, 1792. La Fayette arrives at Paris.

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quired at the palace what course they should adopt in this emergency. Both the King and the Queen answered, that they could place no confidence in La Fayette.[1] He next applied, with a few supporters, who were resolved to uphold the crown in spite of itself, to the national guard; but the influence of the general with that body was gone. He was received in silence by the battalions who had so recently worshipped his footsteps, and retired to his hotel despairing of the constitutional cause. Determined, however, not to abandon his enterprise without a struggle, he appointed a rendezvous in the evening at his own house, of the most zealous of the troops, from whence his design was to march against the Jacobin Club, and close its sittings. Hardly thirty men appeared, and irresolution and uncertainty was painted in every countenance. In despair at the apathy of the public mind, La Fayette, after remaining a few days in Paris, set off alone, and returned to the army, after having incurred the disgrace with one party of endeavouring to control the Revolution; with the other, of having failed in the attempt. He was burnt in effigy by the Jacobins in the Palais Royal, so recently the scene of his civic triumphs.[2]

[1] Madame Campan, ii. 224. Th. ii. 154, 155.

[2] Lac. 249, 250. Mig. i. 179, 180. Th. ii. 151. 155.

This was the last struggle of the Constitutionalists; thenceforward they never were heard of in the Revolution, except when their adherents were conducted to the scaffold. Their failure was the more remarkable, because not a year before they had acquired an absolute ascendant in Paris, and defeated an insurrection of the populace in a period of the highest public excitement. In such convulsions, more perhaps than in any other situation of life, it may truly be said that there is a tide in the affairs of men. The moment of success, if not seized, is lost

for ever; new passions succeed; new interests are awakened; and the leader of a nation at one period often finds himself, within a few months, as powerless as the humblest individual.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 180.

Girondists openly aim at overturning the throne.

The Girondists and Republicans, emboldened by the failure of La Fayette's attempt, now openly aimed at the dethronement of the King. Vergniaud, in a powerful discourse, portrayed the dangers which threatened the country. He quoted the article of the constitution, which declared, "that if the King put himself at the head of an armed force against the nation, or did not oppose a similar enterprise attempted in his name, he should be held to have abdicated the throne."—"Oh, King!" he continued, "who doubtless thought with the tyrant Lysander, that truth is not more imperishable than falsehood, and that we amuse the people with oaths as we amuse children with toys; who feigned only to regard the laws in order to preserve an authority, which might enable you to brave them; do you suppose that we are any longer to be deceived by your hypocritical protestations? Was it to defend us that you opposed to the enemy's soldiers, forces whose inferiority rendered their defeat inevitable? Was it to defend us that you suffered a general to escape who had violated the constitution? Did the law give you the choice of your ministers for our happiness or our misery? of your generals for our glory or our shame? the right of sanctioning the laws, the civil list, and so many prerogatives, to destroy the constitution of the empire? No! One whom the generosity of the French could not affect, whom the love of despotism alone could influence, has obviously no regard for the constitution which he has so basely violated, for the people whom he has wan-

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tonly betrayed."—"The danger which threatens us," said Brissot, "is the most extraordinary which has yet appeared in the world. Our country is in peril, not because it wants defenders, not because its soldiers are destitute of courage, not because its frontiers are unfortified, its resources defective, but because a hidden cause paralyses all its powers. Who is it that does so? A single man. He whom the constitution has declared its chief, and treachery has made its enemy. You are told to fear the King of Bohemia and Hungary: I tell you that the real strength of the kings is at the Tuileries, and that it is there you must strike to subdue them. You are told to strike the refractory priests wherever they are found in the kingdom: I tell you to strike at the court, and you will annihilate the whole priesthood at a single blow. You are told to strike the factious, the intriguers: I tell you, aim your blow at the royal cabinet, and there you will extinguish intrigue in the centre of its ramifications. This is the secret of our position; there is the surce of our evils; there is the point where a remedy is to be applied." [1]

[1] Mig. i. 182.

Country declared in danger.

While the minds of men were wound up to the highest pitch by these inflammatory harangues, the committees, to whom it had been remitted to report on the state of the country, published the solemn declaration,—"Citizens, the country is in danger!" Minute guns announced to the inhabitants of the capital the solemn appeal, which called on every one to lay down his life on behalf of the state. The enthusiasm of the moment was such, that fifteen thousand volunteers enrolled themselves in Paris in a single day. Immediately all the civil authorities declared their sittings permanent; all the citizens,

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not already in the national guard, were put in re-

quisition; pikes distributed to all those not possessed of firelocks; battalions of volunteers formed in the public squares; and standards displayed in conspicuous situations, with the words, "Citizens, the country is in danger!" These measures, which the threatening aspect of public affairs rendered indispensable, excited the revolutionary ardour to the utmost degree. An universal frenzy seized the public mind. So far did this patriotic vehemence carry them, that many departments openly defied the authority of government, and, without any orders, sent their contingents to form the camp of 20,000 men near Paris. This was the commencement of the revolt which overturned the throne.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 183. Th. ii. 159, 163, 184.

The approach of a crisis became evident on the 14th July, when a fête was held in commemoration of the taking of the Bastile. Pétion was the object of the public idolatry. He had been suspended from his office of mayor by the Department of Paris, in consequence of his supineness during the tumult on the 20th June, but the decree was reversed by the National Assembly. His name was inscribed on a thousand banners; on all sides the cry was heard, "Pétion, or death!" The King went in procession from the palace to the altar in the Champ de Mars; but how different was his reception from that which he had experienced two years before on the same occasion! Pensive and melancholy, he marched with the Queen and the Dauphin through a single file of soldiers, who could with difficulty keep back the intrusion, and were wholly unable to prevent the maledictions, of the mob. Innumerable voices reproached him with his perfidious flight; the intrepid aspect of the Swiss Guard alone protected him from actual violence.[2] He returned to the palace in the

Fête of 14th July.

[2] Mig. i. 183. Lac. i. 254. De Staël, ii. 54.

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deepest dejection, and was not again seen in public till he ascended the scaffold.

The declaration by the Assembly that the country was in danger, procured a prodigious accession of power to the revolutionary party. On the 14th July, when the fête of the confederation was held, the persons who had arrived in the capital, from the provinces, did not exceed two thousand, but their numbers daily and rapidly increased. The solemn announcement put all France in motion. Multitudes of ardent young men hourly arrived from the provinces, all filled with the most vehement revolutionary excitation, who added to the already appalling fermentation of the capital. The Assembly, with culpable weakness, gave them the exclusive use of its galleries, where they soon acquired the entire command of its deliberations. They were all paid thirty sous a-day from the public treasury, and formed into a club, which soon surpassed in democratic violence the far-famed meetings of the Jacobins. The determination to overturn the throne was openly announced by these ferocious bands; and some of the French Guards were incorporated by the Assembly with their ranks, from whose discipline and experience they soon acquired the elements of military organization.[1]

[1] Th. ii. 192, 193.

Mean while measures were openly taken which were best calculated to ensure the success of the revolt. The attacks on La Fayette were multiplied; he was denounced at the clubs, and became the object of popular execration. The war party was every where predominant. The whole jealousy of the Assembly was directed against the court, from whom, aided by the allies, they expected a speedy punishment for their innumerable acts of treason. By their orders,

such battalions of the national guard as were suspected of a leaning towards the court, especially the grenadiers of the quarter of St Thomas, were jealously watched; the club of the Feuillants was closed; the grenadiers, and chasseurs of the national guard, who constituted the strength of the burgher force, were disbanded, and the troops of the line and Swiss guard removed to a distance from Paris.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 183. Lac. i. 255. Th. ii. 193.

The chiefs of the revolt met at Charenton, but none could be brought to accept the perilous duties of leading the attack. Robespierre spoke with alarm of the dangers which attended it; Danton, Collot d'Herbois, Billaud Varennes, and the other leaders of the popular party, professed themselves willing to second, but not fitted to head the enterprise. At length Danton presented Westerman; a man of undaunted courage and savage character, who subsequently signalized himself in the war of La Vendée, and ultimately perished on the scaffold.[2]

[2] Lac. i. 261.

The court, amidst the general dissolution of their authority, had no hope but on the approach of the allied armies. The Queen was possessed of their proposed line of march; she knew when they were expected at Verdun, and the intervening towns,—the unhappy princess expected to be delivered in a month. All the measures of the court were taken to gain time for their approach. In the mean while, the royal family laboured under such apprehensions of being poisoned, that they ate and drank nothing but what was secretly prepared by one of the ladies of the bedchamber, and privately brought by Madame Campan, after the viands prepared by the cook had been placed on the table. Great numbers of the Royalists, with faithful devotion, daily repaired to the Tuileries to offer their lives to their Sovereign, amidst

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the perils which were evidently approaching; but, though their motives command respect, the diversity of their counsels added to the natural irresolution of his character. Some were for transporting him to Compeigne, and thence, by the Forest of Ardennes, to the banks of the Rhine; others, amongst whom was La Fayette, besought him to seek an asylum with the armies; while Malesherbes strongly counselled his abdication, as the only chance of safety. In the midst of such distracting counsels, and in the presence of such evident dangers, nothing was done. A secret flight was resolved on one day, and promised every chance of success; but, after reflecting on it for the night, the King determined to abandon that project, lest it should be deemed equivalent to a declaration of civil war. Royalist committees were formed, and every effort was made to arrest the progress of the insurrection, but all in vain: the court found itself supported by a few thousand resolute gentlemen, who were willing to lay down their lives in its defence, but could not, amidst revolutionary millions, acquire the organization requisite to ensure its safety.[1]

[1] Bert. de Moll. viii. 284, 300. Th. ii. 209, 213. Camp. ii. 125, 188, 230.

Advance and proclamation of the Duke of Brunswick.

The conspiracy, which was originally fixed for the 4th August, misgave more than once, from the people not being deemed by the leaders in a sufficient state of excitement to ensure the success of the enterprise. But this defect was soon removed, by the progress and injudicious conduct of the allied troops. The Duke of Brunswick broke up from Coblentz on the 25th July, and advanced at the head of 70,000 Prussians, and 68,000 Austrians and Hessians, into the French territory. His entry was preceded by a proclamation, in which he reproached "those who had usurped the reins of government in France with

having troubled the social order, and overturned the legitimate government; with having committed daily outrages on the King and Queen; with having, in an arbitrary manner, invaded the rights of the German Princes in Alsace and Lorrain, and declared war unnecessarily against the King of Hungary and Bohemia. He proclaimed in consequence, "that the Allied Sovereigns had taken up arms to stop the anarchy which prevailed in France, to check the dangers which threatened the throne and the altar, to give liberty to the King, and restore him to the legitimate authority of which he had been deprived, but without any intention whatever of individual aggrandisement; that the national guards would be held responsible for the maintenance of order till the arrival of the allied forces, and that those who dared to resist must expect all the rigour of military execution. Finally, he warned the National Assembly, the municipality, and city of Paris, that if they did not forthwith liberate the King, and return to their allegiance, they should be held personally responsible, and answer with their heads for their disobedience; and that, if the palace were forced, or the slightest insult offered to the royal family, an exemplary and memorable punishment should be inflicted, by the total destruction of the city of Paris."[2]

[2] Mig. i. 186.

Had this manifesto been couched in more moderate language, and followed up by a rapid and energetic military movement, it might have had the desired effect; the passion for power been supplanted in the excited multitude by that of fear; the insurrection crushed like the subsequent ones of Spain and Poland, before it had acquired the consistency of military power, and the throne of Louis, for a time at least, re-established. But coming, as it did, in a moment

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of extreme public excitation; and enforced, as it was, by the most feeble and inefficient military measures, it contributed in a signal manner to accelerate the march of the Revolution, and was the immediate cause of the downfall of the throne. The leaders of the Jacobins had no longer any reason to complain of the want of enthusiasm of the people. An unanimous spirit of resistance burst forth in every part of France; the military preparations were redoubled, the ardour of the multitude was raised to the highest pitch. The manifesto of the Allied Powers was regarded as unfolding the real designs of the court, and the emigrants. Revolt against the throne appeared the only mode of maintaining their liberties; the people of Paris had no choice between victory and death. It is painful to think that the King so soon became the victim, in a great measure, of the apprehension excited by the language of the Allies, which differed so widely from what he had so wisely recommended. Even in the midst of his apprehensions, however, he never lost his warm love to his people: "How soon," he often exclaimed, "would all these chagrins be forgotten, in the slightest return of their affection!"

[1] Mig. i. 186. Toul. ii. 220. Th. ii. 230.

The leaders of the different parties strove to convert this effervescence into the means of advancing their separate ambitious designs. The Girondists were desirous of having the King dethroned by a decree of the Assembly, because, as they had acquired the majority in that body, that would have been equivalent to vesting supreme dominion in themselves; but this did by no means answer the views of the popular demagogues, who were as jealous of the Assembly as the crown, and aimed at overthrowing, at one blow, the legislature and the throne.

Danton, Robespierre, Marat, Camille Desmoulins, Fabre d'Eglantine, and their associates, were the leaders of the popular insurrection, which was intended not only to destroy the King, but establish the multitude. The seeds of division, therefore, between the Girondists and the Jacobins, were sown from the moment that they combined together to overturn the monarchy; the first sought to establish the middling class and the Assembly on the ruins of the throne; the last to elevate the multitude by the destruction of both.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 187. Toul. ii. 21.

The arrival of the federal troops from Marseilles in the beginning of August augmented the strength and confidence of the insurgents. On the 3d, the sections were extremely agitated, and that of Mauconsiel declared itself in a state of insurrection. The dethronement of the King was discussed with vehemence in all the popular clubs; and Pétion, with a formidable deputation, appeared at the bar of the Assembly, and demanded it in the name of the municipality and the sections. That body remitted the petition to a committee to report. On the 8th, a stormy discussion arose on the proposed accusation of La Fayette; but the Constitutionalists threw it out by a majority of 406 to 224: So strongly confirmed was the majority in the legislature, on the very eve of a convulsion destined to overthrow both them and the throne! The clubs and the populace were to the last degree irritated at the acquittal of their former idol; all those who had voted with the majority were insulted as they left the hall; and the streets resounded with cries against the Assembly, which had acquitted "the traitor, La Fayette!"[2]

August 3. Preparations for the revolt.

[2] Toul. i. 224. Mig. i. 187. Th. ii. 237.

On the 9th, the effervescence was extreme; the Constitutionalists complained of the insults to which

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they had been exposed on leaving the Hall on the preceding day, and insisted that the Marseillois troops should be sent to the camp at Soissons. While the discussion on the subject was going forward, it was announced to the Assembly that one of the sections had declared, that if the dethronement was not pronounced on that day, they would sound the tocsin, and beat the *générale* at midnight, and march against the palace. Forty-seven out of the forty-eight sections of Paris had approved of this resolution. The Legislature required the authorities of the departments, and of the city of Paris, to maintain the public tranquillity; the first replied that they had every inclination, but did not possess the power to do so; Pétion answered in name of the latter, that as the sections had resumed their powers, his functions were reduced to mere persuasion. The Assembly separated without having done any thing to ward off the coming blow.[1]

[1] Toul. ii. 228. Mig. i. 188. Th. ii. 238, 239.

Insurrection of the 10th August.

At length, at midnight, on the 9th August, a cannon was fired, the tocsin sounded, and the *générale* beat in every quarter of Paris; the insurgents immediately began to assemble in great strength at their different rallying points. The survivors of the bloody catastrophe which was about to commence, have portrayed in the strongest colours the horrors of that dreadful night, when the oldest monarchy in Europe began to fall. The incessant clang of the tocsin, the rolling of the drums, the rattling of artillery and ammunition-waggons along the streets, the cries of the insurgents, the march of columns, rung in their ears for long after, and haunted their minds, even in moments of festivity and rejoicing.[2] The Club of the Jacobins, that of the Cordeliers, and the section of Quinze Vingt, in the Faubourg St Antoine,

[2] De Staël, ii. 61. Th. ii. 241, 242.

were the three centres of the insurrection. The most formidable forces were assembled at the Club of the Cordeliers; the Marseillois troops were there, and the vigour of DANTON gave energy to all their proceedings: "It is time," said he, "to appeal to the laws and legislators; the laws have made no provision for such offences, the legislators are the accomplices of the criminals. Already they have acquitted La Fayette; to absolve that traitor is to deliver us to him, to the enemies of France, to the sanguinary vengeance of the Allied Kings. This very night the perfidious Louis has chosen to deliver to carnage and conflagration the capital, which he is prepared to quit in the moment of its ruin. To arms! to arms! no other chance of escape is left to us." The insurgents, and especially the Marseillois, impatiently called for the signal to march; and the cannon of all the sections began to roll towards the centre of the city.[1]

[1] Lac. i. 264.

The first step was to seize the hôtel de Ville, dismiss the municipality, and appoint a new magistracy, chosen from the most violent among the people. This was done almost without opposition, so completely were all the authorities paralysed by terror of the impending danger. Having gained this central point, their forces began to assemble in the place de Grève, cannon arrived from all quarters, and the long columns of spearmen were seen to debouche from the crowded quarters of the city. Paris was in the most dreadful state of agitation; but in the midst of the alarm a great proportion of the national guard assembled, and repaired to the Tuileries, where a respectable force was now collected.[2]

[2] Lac. i. 264, 265. Toul. ii. 229. Mig. i. 189.

Aware of their danger, the court had for some days been making preparations to resist the threatened

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attack. Their principal reliance was on the Swiss guard, whose loyalty, always conspicuous, had been wrought up to the highest pitch by the misfortunes and liberality of the royal family. The Assembly had ordered them to be removed from Paris, but the ministers, on various pretexts, had contrived to delay the execution of the order, though they had not ventured to bring to the defence of the palace the half of the corps, which lay at Courbevoie. The number of the guard actually in attendance was about 800. The most faithful of the national guard rapidly arrived, and filled the court of the Tuileries; the grenadiers of the quarter of St Thomas had been at their post even before the signal of insurrection was given. Seven or eight hundred royalists, chiefly of noble families, filled the interior of the palace, determined to share the dangers of their sovereign; but their presence rather injured than promoted the preparations for defence. A motley group, without any regular uniform, variously armed with pistols, sabres, and firelocks, they were incapable of any useful organization; while their presence cooled the ardour of the national guard, by awakening their ill-extinguished jealousy of the aristocratical party. The heavy dragoons, on horseback, with several pieces of artillery, were stationed in the gardens and court, but in that formidable arm they were deplorably inferior to the forces of the insurgents. The forces on the royal side were numerous, but little reliance could be placed on a great proportion of them; and the gendarmerie à cheval, a most important force in civil conflicts, soon gave a fatal example of disaffection, by deserting in a body to the enemy.[1] This powerful corps was chiefly composed of the former French guards, who had thus the infamy twice, in the same

Preparations of the court.

[1] Lac. i. 265, 266. Th. ii. 243. Mig. i. 189.

convulsions, of betraying at once their sovereign and their oaths. CHAP. V. 1792.

At the first alarm the Assembly met, and Vergniaud took the chair. Their disposition to aid the throne was undoubted; but the insurrection of the people had deprived them of all their means of giving it effectual support. Their first measure had the most disastrous consequences. Pétion, Mayor of Paris, was at the palace, where he was giving an account of the state of the capital; they sent for him to the bar of the Assembly, and ordered him to repair to his post at the Hôtel de Ville. He was no sooner arrived there, than he suffered himself to be made prisoner by the insurgent force which had overturned the municipality, and without acquainting him with the change which had taken place, ordered Mandat, the commander of the national guards, to repair to the Place de Grève. In obedience to the civil authority, Mandat went there; he was immediately seized at the Hôtel de Ville, and accused of having ordered his troops to fire upon the people. Perceiving from the new faces around him that the magistracy was changed, he turned pale; he was instantly sent under a guard to the Abbey, but murdered by the populace on the very steps of the municipal palace.[1] The new municipality forthwith gave the command of the national guard to Santerre, the leader of the insurgents.[2]

[1] Mig. i. 190.
[2] Ibid. Toul. ii. 233. Th. ii. 249.

The death of Mandat was an irreparable loss to the royal cause, as his influence was indispensable to persuade the national guard to fight, already much shaken by the appearance of so many royalists among the defenders of the King. At five in the morning, the King visited the interior parts of the palace, accompanied by the Queen, the Dauphin, and Madame

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Elizabeth. The troops in the inside were animated with the best spirit, and the hopes of the royal family began to revive; but they were cruelly undeceived on descending the staircase, and passing in review the forces in the Place Carrousel and the Garden. Some battalions, particularly those of the Filles de Saint Thomas and the Petits Peres, received them with enthusiasm, but, in general, they were silent and irresolute, and some, particularly the cannoneers and the battalion of Croix Rouge, raised the cry of "Vive la Nation!" Two regiments of pikemen, in defiling before the King, openly shouted "Vive la Nation! vive Pétion! A bas le Veto, a bas le Traitre!" Overcome by these ominous symptoms, the King returned, pale and depressed, to the palace. The Queen displayed the ancient spirit of her race. "Every thing which you hold most dear," said she, to the grenadiers of the national guard, "your homes, your wives, your children, depends on our existence. To-day, our cause is that of the people." These words, spoken with dignity, roused the enthusiasm of the troops to the highest degree; but they could only promise to sacrifice their lives in her defence; nothing announced the enthusiasm of victory. Though the air of the King was serene, despair was fixed in his heart. He had no apprehensions for himself, and had refused to put on the shirt of mail which the Queen had formed to avert the stroke of an assassin. "No," replied he, "in the day of battle the King should be clothed as the meanest of his followers." But he could not be prevailed upon to seize the decisive moment. Nothing is more certain, than that if he had charged at the head of his followers, he would have dispersed the insurrection, and possibly, even at the eleventh hour, restored the throne.[1]

[1] Toul. ii. 236. Mig. i. 190. Lac. i. 267. Th. ii. 252, 253, 255.

While irresolution and despondency prevailed at the Tuileries, the energy of the insurgents was hourly increasing. Early in the morning they had forced the arsenal, and distributed arms among the multitude. A column of the Faubourg St Antoine, composed of 15,000 men, and that of the Faubourg St Marceau, 5000 strong, had marched towards the palace at six in the morning, and were every moment increasing on the road. A troop, placed by order of the directory of the department on the Pont Neuf, had been forced, and the communication between the opposite banks of the river was open. Soon after, the advanced guard of the insurrection, composed of the troops from Marseilles and Brittany, had debouched by the Rue St Honore, and occupied the Place Carrousel, with their cannon directed against the palace. Roederer, in this emergency, petitioned the Assembly for authority to treat with the insurgents, but they paid no regard to his application. He next applied to the national guard, and read to them the articles of the constitution, which enjoined them, in case of attack, to repel force by force; but a slender proportion of them only seemed disposed to support the throne, and the cannoneers, instead of an answer, unloaded their pieces. Finding the popular cause every where triumphant, he returned in dismay to the palace.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 192. Lac. i. 267. Th. ii. 253.

The King was there sitting in council with the Queen and his Ministers. Roederer immediately announced that the danger was extreme; that the insurgents would agree to no terms; that the national guard could not be relied on; and that the destruction of the royal family was inevitable if they did not take refuge in the bosom of the Assembly. "I would rather," said the Queen, "be nailed to the

The King leaves the palace, and joins the Assembly.

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walls of the palace than leave it!" and immediately addressing the King, and presenting to him a pistol, exclaimed, "Now, Sire, this is the moment to show yourself." The King remained silent; he had the resignation of a martyr, but not the spirit of a hero. "Are you prepared, Madame," said Roederer, "to take upon yourself the responsibility of the death of the King, of yourself, of your children, and of all who are here to defend you?" These words decided Louis; he rose up, and addressing himself to those around him, said, "Gentlemen, nothing remains to be done here." Accompanied by the Queen, the Dauphin, and the royal family, he descended the stair, and crossed the garden, protected by the Swiss Guards, and the battalions of the Filles de St Thomas and the Petits Peres. These faithful troops had the utmost difficulty in getting them into the Assembly in the adjoining street, amidst the menaces and execrations of the multitude.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 192. Lac. i. 267, 268. Th. ii. 254, 256.

"Gentlemen," said the King, on entering the Assembly, "I am come here to save the nation from the commission of a great crime; I shall always consider myself, with my family, safe in your hands."—"Sire," replied the President Vergniaud, "you may rely on the firmness of the National Assembly; its members have sworn to die in defence of the rights of the people, and of the constituted authorities; it will remain firm at its post; we will die rather than abandon it." In truth, the Girondists, having gained from the insurrection their real object of humbling the King, were now sincere in their wish to repress the multitude—a vain attempt, which only showed their unfitness to guide during the stormy days of a revolution.[2]

[2] Mig. i. 193. Lac. i. 269. Th. ii. 257.

Mean while the new municipality, organized by

Danton and Robespierre, was directing all the movements of the insurrection. A formidable force occupied the side of the Place Carrousel next the Louvre, and numerous pieces of artillery were pointed against the palace, whose defenders were severely weakened by the detachment of the Swiss guard and the royalist battalions who had accompanied the King. The gendarmerie, posted in front of the palace, had shamefully quitted their post, crying "Vive la Nation!" the national guard was so divided as to be incapable of action; the cannoneers had openly joined the enemy; but, with heroic firmness, the Swiss guard remained unshaken in resolution amidst the defection of all around them. The assailants having endeavoured to penetrate into the interior of the palace, a struggle commenced, and the Swiss troops, firing from the windows, speedily drove back the foremost of their enemies; immediately after, descending the staircase, and ranging themselves in battle array in the court of the Carrousel, by a heavy and sustained fire, they completed their defeat. The insurgents, late so audacious, fled in confusion as far as the Pont Neuf, and many never stopped till they had reached their homes in the faubourgs. Three hundred horse, in that critical moment, might have saved the monarchy. But the heroic defenders of the palace, few in number, and destitute of cavalry, did not venture to follow up their victory; the populace gradually regained their courage when they perceived they were not pursued, and a new attack, directed by Westerman, was prepared, under cover of a numerous artillery. The Marseillois and Breton troops returned in greater force; the Swiss were mown down with grape-shot, and their undaunted ranks fell in the place where they stood, unconquered even in death.[1]

Desperate fight in the Place Carrousel.

[1] Mig. i. 194. Lac. i. 271, 273. Toul. ii. 252, 253. Th. ii. 260, 261.

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In its last extremity, it was neither in its titled nobility, nor its native armies, that the French throne found fidelity, but in the freeborn mountaineers of Lucerne, unstained by the vices of a corrupted age, and firm in the simplicity of rural life.

Massacre of the Swiss.

It was no longer a battle, but a massacre; the enraged multitude broke into the palace, and put to death every one found within it; the fugitives, pursued into the gardens of the Tuileries by the pikemen from the faubourgs, were unmercifully put to death under the trees, amidst the fountains and at the feet of the statues. Some miserable wretches climbed up the marble monuments which adorn that splendid spot; the insurgents abstained from firing lest they should injure the statuary, but pricked them with their bayonets till they came down, and then murdered them at their feet; an instance of taste for art, mingled with revolutionary cruelty, perhaps unparalleled in the history of the world.[1] During the whole evening and night, the few survivors of the Swiss guard were sought out with unpitying ferocity by the populace, and wherever they were found, immediately massacred; hardly any escaped, and those that did so, owed their lives almost uniformly to the fidelity of female attachment.[2]

[1] Scott's Paris Revisited, 291.

[2] Lac. i. 272, 273. Toul. ii. 253.

While these terrible scenes were going forward, the Assembly was in the most violent agitation. At the first discharge of musketry, the King declared that he had forbid the troops to fire, and signed an order to the Swiss guards to stop the combat, but the officer who bore it was massacred on the road. As the firing grew louder the consternation increased, and many deputies rose to escape; but others exclaimed "No! this is our post." The people in the galleries drowned the speakers by their cries,[3] and

[3] Toul. ii. 254. Lac. i. 272. Mig. i. 195. Th. ii. 263.

soon the loud shouts, "Victoire, victoire, les Suisses sont vaincus!" announced that the fate of the monarchy was decided. CHAP. V. 1792.

The 10th August was the last occasion on which the means of saving France were placed in the hands of the King; but there can be little doubt that had he possessed a firmer character, he might have accomplished the task. The great bulk of the nation was disgusted with the excesses of the Jacobins, and the outrage of the 20th June had excited an universal feeling of horror. If he had acted with vigour on that trying occasion, repelled force by force, and seized the first moments of victory to proclaim as enemies the Jacobins and Girondists who had an hundred times violated the constitution, dissolved the Assembly, closed the clubs, and arrested the leaders of the revolt, that day would have re-established the royal authority. But that conscientious prince never imagined that the salvation of his kingdom was indissolubly connected with his private safety; and he preferred exposing himself to certain destruction, to the risk of shedding blood in the attempt to avert it.[1] [1] Dumont, 438.

In the first tumult of alarm, the Assembly published a proclamation, recommending moderation in the use of victory. A deputation from the municipality shortly after appeared at the bar, demanding that their powers should be confirmed, and insisting for the dethronement of the King, and the immediate convocation of a National Convention: Other deputations speedily followed, pressing the same demands, and enforcing them with the language of conquerors. Yielding to necessity, the Assembly, on the motion of Vergniaud, passed a decree, suspending the King, dismissing the ministers, and directing the immediate formation of a National Convention.[2] King dethroned. August 10, 1792. [2] Mig. i. 195. Toul. ii. 256. Th. i. 263, 264.

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Reflections on the fall of the monarchy.

It is not at the commencement of revolutionary disturbances that the danger to social happiness is to be apprehended; but after the burst of popular fury is over, and when the successful party begin to suffer from the passions to which they owed their elevation. The 10th August did not come till three years *after* the 14th July. The reason is evident: In the first tumult of passion, and in the exultation of successful resistance, the people are in good-humour both with themselves and their leaders, and the new government is installed in its duties amidst the applause and hopes of their fellow-citizens. But after this ebullition of triumphant feeling is over, come the sad and inevitable consequences of public convulsions,—disappointed hopes, exaggerated expectations, industry without employment, capital without investment. The public suffering which immediately follows the triumph of the populace, is invariably greater than that which stimulated their resistance. The ablest Republican writers confess, that one-half of the misery which desolated France during the Revolution, would have overwhelmed the monarchy.[1] This suffering is inevitable; it is the necessary consequences of shaken credit, invaded property, and uncontrolled licentiousness; but coming as it does in the train of splendid hopes and excited imaginations, it occasions a discontent and acrimony in the lower orders, which can hardly fail of producing fresh convulsions. The people are never so ripe for a second revolution, as shortly after they have successfully achieved a first.

[1] Mig. i. 127.

It is the middling ranks who organize the first resistance to government, because it is their influence only which can withstand the shock of established power. They accordingly are at the head of the

first revolutionary movement. But the passions which have been awakened, the hopes that have been excited, the disorder which has been produced in their struggle, lay the foundation of a new and more terrible convulsion against the rule which they have established. Every species of authority appears odious to men who have tasted of the license and excitation of a Revolution; the new government speedily becomes as unpopular as the one which has been overthrown; the ambition of the lower orders aims at establishing themselves in the situation in which a successful effort has placed the middling. A more terrible struggle awaits them than that which they have just concluded with arbitrary power; a struggle with superior numbers, stronger passions, more unbridled ambition; with those whom monied fear has deprived of employment, revolutionary innovation filled with hope, inexorable necessity impelled to exertion. In this contest, the chances are against the duration of the new institutions, unless the supporters can immediately command the aid of a numerous and disciplined body of men, proof alike to the intimidation of popular violence and the seduction of popular ambition.

Three great powers were brought into collision in the French Revolution; the People, the Aristocracy, the Allied Sovereigns. Each committed capital errors, productive of the most ruinous consequences; to their combined influence the unexampled horrors which followed are in a great measure to be ascribed.

The first capital error of the People consisted in the confiscation of the property of the church. This flagrant act of injustice produced consequences the most disastrous, both upon the progress of the

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Errors of the popular party in France.

Revolution and the direction of the public mind. By alienating the affections, and inflaming the resentment of a numerous and powerful body, it produced divisions in the popular party, and superadded to the miseries of civil the rancour of religious strife. By arraying the cause of freedom against that of religion, it separated the two mighty powers which move mankind, and whose combined strength had in former ages established the fabric of civil liberty on the firm basis of private virtue. By exciting the force of public resentment against the church, it created a fatal schism between public activity and private virtue; sapped the foundations of domestic happiness, by introducing infidelity and doubt into private life, and overwhelmed the land with a flood of licentiousness, by removing the counterpoise created by religion to the force of the passions. Ages must elapse, and possibly a new revolution be undergone, before the license given to the passions can be checked, or the general dissolution of manners prevented.* These consequences were as unnecessary as they are deplorable. There was no necessity for the spoliation, because if the exigencies of the Exchequer required an immediate supply, it should have been raised by a general contribution of all the classes of the state, not made good by the destruction of one of them. There was no moderation in the mode in which it was accomplished; because, even supposing the measure unavoidable, it should have been carried into effect without injuring the rights of the present incumbents.[1] It ill became a people, insurgent against the oppression of their government, to commence their

[1] Madame de Staël, Rév. Franç. ii. 94.

* Every *third* child in Paris is a bastard, and a large proportion of the poor die in hospitals. DUPIN, *Force Commerciale*, i. 40, 99.

reign by an act of injustice greater than any of which they complained.

The next great fault of the Revolutionists consisted in the confiscation of the property of the noblesse, in pursuance of the cruel and unjust decrees of the Assembly, declaring their estates forfeited if they did not return to France before a certain day. Nothing could exceed the iniquity of this measure, because the mere fact of leaving the country was neither a moral nor a political offence; and even if it had, to confiscate their estates because they declined to return and place their necks under the guillotine, was a measure of severity greater than any of which the popular party complained, and which never disgraced the worst periods of feudal bondage. As this measure was thus to the last degree unjust, so it has produced effects from which France never can recover, and which, it is much to be feared, have rendered hopeless in that country the establishment of the regulated freedom of modern Europe. General liberty in all classes, it is now abundantly proved by experience, can be maintained only by the combined and counteracting influence of an aristocracy supporting, and a popular party restraining, the efforts of the executive. To suppose that it can exist in a country such as France became, after the destruction of the aristocracy, that is, when the great bulk of the landed property was divided among the peasantry, and no intermediate class existed, except in towns, between the throne and the cultivator, is out of the question. In such circumstances there is no alternative but American equality or Asiatic despotism: it is not difficult to perceive in which an old state far advanced in the career of opulence, and surrounded by ambitious military monarchies, must finally terminate.

CHAP. V. 1792. The event has abundantly proved the justice of these views. Previous to the Revolution the provinces maintained a long and honourable struggle with the crown for the national liberties, and foremost in this contest were to be seen the most illustrious of the aristocracy of France. The Parliaments, both of Paris and the provinces, derived their chief lustre from the consideration, character, and importance of their members, and it was by their influence and example that the whole nation was stimulated to the resistance which ultimately led to the Revolution. But since the destruction of the aristocracy, nothing of the kind has occurred. France has invariably submitted without a struggle to the ruling power in the capital, and whoever obtained the ascendency in its councils, whether by the passions of the populace or the bayonets of the army, has ruled with despotic authority over the remainder of the kingdom. The bones and sinews of freedom were broken when the aristocracy was destroyed: Louis XV. and his ill-fated successor found it impossible to control the independent spirit of the provincial parliaments, but Napoleon had no more obsequious instruments of his will than in the conservative senate. The passions of the multitude, strong and often irresistible in moments of effervescence, cannot be relied on as permanent supporters of the cause of freedom; it is an hereditary aristocracy, supported when necessary by their aid, which alone can be depended upon in such a contest, because they only possess lasting interests which are liable to be affected by the efforts of tyranny, and are influenced by motives not likely to disappear with the fleeting changes of popular opinion. Had the English Puritans destroyed the landed proprietors in 1642, an hundred and forty

years of liberty and glory would never have followed the Revolution of 1688. It was not Napoleon who destroyed the elements of freedom in France: he found them extinguished to his hand—he only needed to seize the reins so strongly bitted on the nation by his revolutionary predecessors. There never was such a pioneer for tyranny as the National Assembly. CHAP. V. 1792.

The fault of the aristocracy consisted in leaving their country in the period of its greatest agitation, and their sovereign in his extremest peril, to invoke the hazardous aid of foreign powers. Such a proceeding is always both criminal and dangerous; criminal, because it is a base desertion of the first social duties; dangerous, because success with such assistance produces perils as great as defeat. By striving to raise a crusade against French liberty, they put themselves in the predicament of having as much to fear from victory as defeat; the first endangered the national independence, the last threatened the power and possessions of their order. The French nobility never recovered the disgrace of having deserted to the ranks of the enemy, and appeared foremost in the battalions of those who, it was thought, came to subdue their country. The Jacobins have to thank their adversaries for having put into their hands the most powerful of all the engines by which they worked on the public mind; that of representing the aristocrats as the enemies of France, and the cause of democracy as the same as that of national independence. When we consider the powerful effects which a small body of disciplined men produced on the Champ de Mars under La Fayette, and on the Place Carrousel on the 10th August, it is painful to reflect on the stand which might have been made against popular violence, by Errors of the nobles.

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a small portion of that vast army of emigrants, who first occasioned the Revolution by their insolence, and then betrayed their sovereign by their desertion.

Errors of the Allies.

The error of the Allied Sovereigns, and it was one fraught with the most disastrous consequences, consisted in attacking France at a period of its highest excitation, and thereby converting revolutionary frenzy into patriotic resistance, without following it up with such vigour as to crush the spirit which was thus awakened. France was beginning to be divided by the progress of the Revolution, when foreign invasion united it. The cruel injustice of the Constituent Assembly to the priests had roused the terrible war in La Vendée, when the dread of foreign invasion for a time united the most discordant interests. The catastrophe of the 10th August was in some degree owing to the imprudent advance and ruinous retreat of the Prussian army; the friends of order at Paris were paralysed by the danger of the national independence; the supporters of the throne, ashamed of a cause which seemed leagued with the public enemies. Mr Burke had prophesied that France would be divided into a number of federal republics; this perhaps would have happened, but for the foreign invasion which soon after took place. The unity of the republic, the triumphs of the consulate, the conquests of the empire, were accelerated by the ill-supported attacks of the Allies.

France, like every other revolutionary power, indeed, would ultimately have been driven into a system of foreign aggression, in order to find employment for the energy which the public convulsions had developed, and food for the misery which they had created; but it is extremely doubtful whether from this source ever could have arisen the same union of

feeling and military power which sprung up after the defeated invasion of the Allies in 1792, In combating a revolution, one of two things must be done; either it must be left to waste itself by its own divisions, which, if practicable, is the wiser course, or attacked with such vigour and such a force, as may speedily lead to its subjugation.

It is a total mistake to suppose, that the Revolution in France was unavoidable, or that the transition cannot be made from a state of despotism to one of comparative freedom, without going through so terrible a convulsion. It would be just as rational to suppose, that a river cannot descend from a higher to a lower level without being precipitated down a cataract, instead of flowing in a gentle descent. Changes as great as resulted in France from the Revolution, have been gradually induced in many other countries without producing such a catastrophe. The guilt of some of the parties during its progress, the weakness of others, are alone chargeable with its horrors. Its progress, like that of guilt in the individual, did not become finally fixed to evil, till irreparable injustice had been committed, and many opportunities of amendment thrown away. And if there is any one cause more than another, to which these disasters may justly be ascribed, it is the total want of religious feeling or control, in many of the ablest, and almost all the most influential, of its supporters. It was the absence of this check on the base and selfish feelings of our nature, which precipitated the revolutionary party in the outset of their career into those cruel and unjust measures against the nobles and clergy, which excited the cupidity of all the middling orders in the state, by promising them the spoils of their superiors, and laid the foun-

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dations of a lasting and interminable feud between the higher and the lower ranks, by founding the interests of the latter upon the destruction of the former. The dreams of philanthropy, the dictates of enthusiasm, even the feelings of virtue, were found to be but a frail safeguard to public men in the calamitous scenes to which the progress of change speedily brought them. In this respect the English Revolution affords a memorable contrast to that of France; and in its comparatively bloodless career, and the abstinence of the victorious party from any of those unjust measures of confiscation which have proved so destructive in the neighbouring kingdom, may be traced the salutary operation of that powerful restraint upon the base and selfish principles of our nature, which arises from the operation, even in its most extravagant form, of religious feeling. Mr Hume has said, that fanaticism was the disgrace of the Great Rebellion, and that we shall look in vain among the popular leaders of England at that period for the generous sentiments which animated the patriots of antiquity; but without disputing the absurdity of many of their tenets, and the ridiculous nature of much in their manners, it may safely be affirmed, that such fervour was the only effectual bridle which could be imposed on human depravity, when the ordinary restraints of law and order were at an end; and that but for that fanaticism, they would have been disgraced by the proscriptions of Marius, or the executions of Robespierre.

The elevation of public characters is not so much owing to their actual superiority to the rest of mankind, as to their falling in with the circumstances in which they are placed, and representing the spirit of the age in which they have arisen. The eloquence

of Mirabeau would have failed in rousing the people on the 10th August; the energy of Danton would have brought him to the block in the commencement of the Revolution; the ambition of Napoleon would have been shattered against the democratic spirit of 1789. Those great men successively rose to eminence, because their temper of mind fell in with the current of public thought, while their talents enabled them to assume its direction. Mirabeau represented the Constituent Assembly: free in thought, bold in expression, undaunted in speculation, but tinged by the remains of monarchical attachment, and fearful of the excesses its hasty measures were so well calculated to produce. Vergniaud was the model of the ruling party under the Legislative Body: republican in wishes, philosophic in principle, humane in intention, but precipitate and reckless in conduct, blinded by ambition, infatuated by speculation, ignorant of the world and the mode of governing it, alike destitute of the firmness to command, the wickedness to ensure, or the vigour to seize success. Danton was the representative of the Jacobin faction: unbounded in ambition, unfettered by principle, undeterred by blood; who rose in eminence with the public danger, because his talents were fitted to direct, and his energies were never cramped by the fear of exciting popular excesses. It is such men, in every age, who have ultimately obtained the lead in public convulsions; like the vultures, which, invisible in ordinary times, are attracted, by an unerring instinct, to the scene of blood, and reap the last fruits of the discord and violence of others.

CHAPTER VI.

FRENCH REPUBLIC—FROM THE DETHRONEMENT TO THE DEATH OF LOUIS.

Progressive deterioration of the ruling power in France during the Revolution —Causes of this change—Fury of the populace after the storming of the palace—Reappointment of the Girondist Ministry—Disposal of the King and Royal Family—They are transferred to the Temple—The armies follow the Revolution at Paris—Fall and flight of La Fayette—Great influence of Danton, Marat, and Robespierre—Their character—They insist for a tribunal to try offenders against the Revolution—First institution of the Revolutionary Tribunal—Consternation occasioned by the advance of the Prussians—Plan for a massacre in the prisons—Barriers closed to prevent escape of suspected persons—Energetic plans of Danton —Massacre in the prisons—Of the Abbaye—Speech of Billaud Varennes to the murderers—Massacre in the prison of Carmes—Death of the Princess Lamballe —Feeble conduct of the Assembly—Infernal circular by the municipality of Paris to the other authorities in France—Their enormous and undiscovered plunder —Termination of the Legislative Assembly—Elections for the Convention—Prodigious influence of the Jacobin clubs on them—Meeting of the Convention—It proclaims a Republic—Changes the Calendar—Strife of the Girondists and Jacobins—Their character—Vergniaud, Guadet, Gensonne—Barbaroux—Jacobins—Girondists form the right, Jacobins the left of the Assembly—Mutual recriminations of the Girondists and Jacobins—State of finances—Fresh issue of Assignats —Completely democratic constitution, with universal suffrage, established—Great disorders and massacres in France—Accusation of Marat by the Girondists—Louvet arraigns Robespierre—His reply and acquittal—Girondists in vain propose a guard for the Convention—Jacobins spread reports of the division of the Republic—Preparations for the trial of Louis—Violent agitation commenced by the Jacobins—Discovery of the Iron Closet in the Tuileries—Preliminary point —Could Louis be tried by the Convention?—Debate on the subject in the Convention—Majority determine he may be tried—Conduct of the Royal Family since their captivity—They are separated from each other—King brought to the bar of the Assembly—His return to the Temple—Generous devotion of Malesherbes and Tronchet—Splendid peroration of Desezes—Debate on the accusation —Louis is condemned contrary to the opinions of almost all its members—His death resolved on—Dignified conduct of Louis—His last interview with his family —His last communion—and execution—Reflections on his character, and on that event.

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FROM the first commencement of the contest, each successive class that had gained the ascendency in France, had been more violent and more tyrannical

than that which preceded it. The convocation of the States-General, and the oath in the Tennis Court, were the struggles of the nation against the privileged classes; the 14th July, and the capture of the Bastile, the insurrection of the middling class against the government; the 10th August, the revolt of the populace against the middling class and the constitutional throne. The leaders of the National Assembly were, in great part, actuated by the purest motives, and their measures chiefly blamable for the precipitance which sprung from inexperienced philanthropy: the measures of the Convention, tinged by the ferocity of popular ambition, and the increasing turbulence of excited talent: the rule of the Jacobins was signalized by the energy of unshackled guilt, and stained by the cruelty of emancipated slaves.[1]

Progressive deterioration of the ruling powers of France.

[1] Mig. i. 196.

"Subjects," says Tacitus, "cannot, without the greatest danger, subvert the ruling power; for thence, in general, arises a necessity for crime: to avoid the consequences of a single rash act, men are obliged to plunge into the greatest excesses." The career of guilt is the same in nations as individuals; when once commenced, it cannot, without the utmost resolution, be abandoned. The ultimate acts of atrocity in which they both terminate, are, in general, the result of necessity: of the pressure arising from excited passion, or the terror produced by anticipated punishment. The power of repentance exists only in the commencement. If we would avoid the last deeds of blood, we must shun the first seductive path.

There is nothing extraordinary, or contrary to what might have been anticipated, in this progress. The people are, in all ages, either swayed by their interests, or ruled by their passions: the force of intellect, all-powerful in the review of the past, is

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seldom felt in judging of the present. The cause is apparent, and has long ago been stated by Mr Hume: in judging of the actions of others, we are influenced only by our reason, or our feelings: in acting for ourselves, we are governed by our reason, our feelings, and our passions.[1]

[1] Hume, vi. 142.

Cause of this change.

It is a total mistake to suppose that the great body of mankind are capable of judging correctly on public affairs. No man, in any rank, ever found a tenth part of his acquaintance who were fitted for such a task. If the opinions of most men on the great questions which divide society, are examined, they will be found to rest on the most flimsy foundations: early prejudice, personal animosity, private interest, constitute the secret springs from which the opinions flow which ultimately regulate their conduct. Truth, indeed, is, in the end, triumphant; but it becomes predominant only upon the decay of interests, the experience of suffering, or the extinction of passion. The fabric of society is, in ordinary times, kept together, and moderation impressed upon the measures of government by the contrary nature of these interests, and the opposing tendency of these desires. Reason is sometimes heard, when the struggles of party, or the contentions of faction, have exhausted each other. The stability of free institutions arises from the counteracting nature of the forces, which they constantly bring into action on each other.

These considerations furnish the eternal and unanswerable objection to democratical institutions. Wherever governments are directly exposed to their control, they are governed during periods of tranquillity by the cabals of interest, during moments of turbulence by the storms of passion. America, at present, exhibits an example of the former: [2] France, during the Reign of Terror, an instance of the latter.

[2] Hall's America, ii. 173.

Those who refer to the original equality, and common rights of mankind, would do well to show, that men are equal in abilities as well as in birth; that society could exist with the multitude really judging for themselves on public affairs; that the most complicated subject of human study—that in which the greatest range of information is involved, and the coolest judgment required, can be adequately mastered by those who are disqualified by nature from the power of thought, disabled by labour from acquiring knowledge, and exposed by situation to the seductions of interest; that the multitude, when exercising their rights, are not following despotic leaders of their own creation; and that a democracy is not, in Aristotle's words, "an aristocracy of orators, sometimes interrupted by the monarchy of a single orator."

When the different classes, during the convulsions of a revolution, are brought into collision, the virtuous and prudent have no sort of chance with the violent and ambitious, unless the whole virtuous members of the community are early roused to a sense of their danger, and manfully unite in resisting. In the later stages of such troubles, it is extremely difficult for them to recover their ascendency; unless they are resolute and united it is impossible. This is another consequence of the same principle. In the shock of a battle, gentleness and humanity are of little avail: audacity and courage are the decisive qualities. In the contests of faction, wisdom and moderation have as little influence. The virtuous are restrained by scruples, to which the unprincipled are strangers: difficulties which appear insurmountable to men accustomed to weigh the consequences of their actions, vanish before the

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recklessness of those who have nothing to lose. "It was early seen in the Revolution," says Louvet, "that the men with poniards, would sooner or later carry the day against the men with principles; and that the latter, upon the first reverse, must prepare for exile or death." [1]

[1] Louvet, 26. Rév. Mem. vol. xxvi.

The storming of the Tuileries, and the imprisonment of the King, had destroyed the monarchy; the Assembly had evinced its weakness by remaining a passive spectator of the contest; the real power of government had fallen into the hands of the municipality of Paris. The municipality governed Paris; Paris ruled the Assembly; the Assembly guided France. During the conflict, the leaders of the Jacobins avoided the scene of danger; Marat disappeared during the confusion, and left the whole to Westerman; Santerre was holding back with the forces of the faubourgs, till compelled by Westerman, with his sabre at his breast, to join the troops from Marseilles; Robespierre remained concealed, and only appeared twenty-four hours after at the Commune, when he gave himself the whole credit of the affair.[2]

[2] Barbaroux, 4, 43, 69. Th. iii. 4, 5. Mig. i. 200.

Fury of the populace on sacking the palace.

After the overthrow of the Swiss guards, the populace gave full reins to their vengeance in the sacking of the palace. Wearied of massacring or laying waste, they broke to pieces its magnificent furniture, and scattered its remains. Drunken savages broke into the most private apartments of the Queen, and there gave vent to indecent or obscene ribaldry. In an instant, all the drawers and archives were forced open, and the papers they contained torn in pieces, or scattered to the winds. To the horrors of pillage and murder, soon succeeded those of conflagration. Already the flames approached that

august edifice, and the utmost efforts of the Assembly were required to save from destruction the venerated dome of the Tuileries. Nor were the remoter parts of the city exempt from danger. After the discharge of artillery, and the heavy volleys of the platoons had ceased, the dropping fire of the musketry told how active was the pursuit of the fugitives; while its receding sound and reverberation from all quarters, indicated how many parts of the city had become the scene of horrors.[1]

[1] Th. iii. 3.

Early on the 11th, an immense crowd assembled on the spot which was yet reeking with the blood of the Swiss who had perished on the preceding day. A strange mixture of feelings actuated the spectators; they succoured the wounded, and at the same time honours were decreed to the troops engaged on the side of the Republic, and hymns of liberty were sung by the multitude. The emblems of royalty, the statues of the Kings, were, by orders of the Commune, entirely destroyed; those of bronze were carried to the foundery of cannon; even the name of Henry IV. could not protect his image from destruction. The rise of democratic license in France was signalized by the destruction of the most venerable monuments of the monarchy; owing nothing to antiquity, they repudiated the honours she had transmitted to her children.[2]

[2] Lac. Pr. Hist. i. 276. & Hist. ix. 259. Mig. i. 200.

Reappointment of the Girondist ministry.

The first care of the Assembly was to provide in some degree for the administration of public affairs, after the overthrow of the throne. For this purpose, the Girondist ministers, Roland, Clavière, and Servan, were replaced in the offices of the Interior, the War Department, and the Finances; while Danton, who had been the chief director of the revolt, was appointed to the important office of Minister of Pub-

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lic Justice. This audacious demagogue spoke at the head of a deputation from the municipality, in such language as sufficiently demonstrated where the real power of government now resided. "The people who have sent us to your bar," said he, "have charged us to declare to you, that they regard you as fully worthy of their confidence, but that they recognise no other judges of the extraordinary measures to which necessity has driven them, but the voice of the French people, your sovereign as well as ours, as expressed by the Primary Assemblies." Incapable of resistance, the Assembly had no alternative but to pass decrees, sanctioning all that had been done, and inviting the petitioners to make their concurrence known to the people.[1]

[1] Th. iii. 6.

Disposal of the King and Royal Family.

For fifteen hours that the sitting of the Assembly continued, after the massacre of the Swiss, the King and royal family were shut up in the narrow seat which had first served them for an asylum. Exhausted by fatigue, and almost stifled by heat, the infant Dauphin at length fell into a profound sleep in his mother's arms; the Princess Royal and Madame Elizabeth, with their eyes streaming with tears, sat on each side of her. The King was tranquil during all the horrible confusion which prevailed, and listened attentively both to the speeches of the members of the legislature, and the arrogant petitioners who continually succeeded each other at their bar. At length, at one o'clock on the following morning, they were transferred for the night to the building of the Feuillans. When left alone, Louis prostrated himself in prayer. "Thy trials, O God! are dreadful; give us courage to bear them. We adore the hand which chastens, as that which has so often blessed us; have mercy on those who have died

fighting in our defence!" On the following morning, they had the satisfaction of receiving the visits of many faithful Royalists, who, at their own imminent hazard, hastened to share the perils of the royal family. Among the rest was the faithful Hue, who had saved himself by leaping from a window and plunging into the Seine, during the hottest of the fire, where, when almost exhausted, he was picked up by a boatman. Already the august captives felt the pangs of indigence; all their dress and effects had been pillaged or destroyed; the Dauphin was indebted for a change of linen to the care of the lady of the English ambassador, and the Queen was obliged to borrow twenty-five louis from Madame Anguie, one of the ladies of the bedchamber; a fatal gift, which was afterwards made the ground of her trial and death, notwithstanding the claims of youth and beauty, and of the faithful discharge of duty. During the trying days which followed, the King displayed a firmness and serenity which could hardly have been anticipated from his previous character, and showed how little his indecision had proceeded from the apprehension of personal danger.[1]

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[1] Lac. ix. 250, 256.

For three days the royal family slept at the Feuillans; but on the 13th the Assembly, at the command of the Commune, directed that they should be conveyed to the Temple. Notwithstanding the excitement of the populace, many tears were shed as the melancholy procession passed through the streets. The carriage, conveying eleven persons, was stopped on the Place Vendome, in order that they might see the fragments of the statue of Louis XIV.; and at length the doors of the Temple closed upon its victims, and Louis commenced the spotless and immortal days of his life.[2]

They are transferred to the Temple.

August 13.

[2] Lac. ix. 262. Mig. i. 196.

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The victory over the throne on the 10th August, was immediately followed by the submission of all the departments in France to the ruling party. Opinions had been more divided on the revolt of July 14th; so powerfully, during the intervening period, had the revolutionary spirit gained the ascendency, and so much more generally does fear operate than the love of freedom. At Rouen, a slight movement in favour of the constitutional monarchy took place, but being unsupported, it speedily ceased; and the emissaries of the all-powerful Commune of Paris succeeded in terrifying the inhabitants into submission.[1]

The armies obey the ruling powers.

[1] Lac. i. 277. Mig. i. 197.

Very different was the reception of the intelligence at the headquarters of La Fayette's army, which at that juncture was at Sedan. The officers, the soldiers, appeared to share in the consternation of their chief, who resolved to make an effort in favour of the constitutional throne. The municipality of Sedan shared the sentiments of the army; and by command of La Fayette, they arrested and threw into prison the three commissioners despatched by the National Assembly to appease the discontents of the army. The troops and the civil authorities renewed the oath of fidelity to the constitutional throne, and every thing announced a serious convulsion in the state.[2]

[2] Lac. i. 277.

But the ruling power at Paris, in possession of the seat of government and the venerable name of the Assembly, was still predominant in the provinces; the period had not yet arrived when the soldiers, accustomed to look only to their leader, were prepared, at his command, to overthrow the authority of the legislature. The movement of La Fayette, and the troops under his immediate orders, was not generally

Fall and flight of La Fayette. August 17.

seconded. A revolt, in favour of the throne, was looked upon with aversion, as likely to restore the ancient servitude of the nation; the tyranny of the mob, as yet unfelt, was much less the object of apprehension. Luckner, who commanded the army on the Moselle, attempted to second the measure of La Fayette; but Dumourier, and the inferior generals, stimulated by personal ambition, resolved to side with the ruling party. The former, of a feeble and irresolute character, made his public recantation before the municipality of Metz; and La Fayette himself, finding dangers multiplying on all sides, and uncertain what course to adopt in the perilous situation of the royal family, fled from the army, accompanied by Bursau de Pucy, Latour Maubourg, and Lameth, intending to proceed to the United States, where his first efforts in favour of freedom had been made; but he was arrested near the frontier by the Austrians, and conducted to the dungeons of Olmutz. He was offered his liberty on condition of making certain recantations: but he preferred remaining four years in a rigorous confinement, to receding in any particular from the principles which he had embraced. The Assembly declared him a traitor, and set a price on his head: and the first leader of the Revolution owed his life to imprisonment in an Austrian fortress.[1]

[1] Lac. i. 278, 279. Mig. i. 199. Th. iii. 30, 34.

Mean while, the principal powers of government fell into the hands of Danton, Marat, and Robespierre. The first of these had been chiefly instrumental in bringing about the insurrection of the 10th August. During the night preceding the attack, he had repeatedly visited the quarters of the revolutionary troops, and encouraged their ardour; as member of the municipality of Paris, he had been the chief director of their operations. He was shortly

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after, from his situation as minister of justice, invested with supreme authority in the capital, and was chiefly instrumental in bringing about the subsequent massacres in the prisons. Yet Danton was not a mere blood-thirsty tyrant. Bold, unprincipled, and daring, he held that the end in every case justified the means; that nothing was blamable provided it led to desirable results; that nothing was impossible to those who had the courage to attempt it. A gigantic stature, a commanding front, a voice of thunder, rendered him the fit leader of assassins more timid or less ferocious than himself A starving advocate in 1789, he rose in audacity and eminence with the public disturbances; prodigal in expense, and drowned in debt, he had no chance, at any period, even of personal freedom, but in constantly advancing with the fortunes of the Revolution. Like Mirabeau, he was the slave of sensual passions; like him, he was the terrific leader, during his ascendency, of the ruling class; but he shared the character, not of the patricians who commenced the Revolution, but of the plebeians who consummated its wickedness. Inexorable in general measures, he was indulgent, humane, and even generous to individuals; the author of the massacres of 2d September, he saved all those who fled to him, and spontaneously liberated his personal adversaries from prison. Individual elevation, and the safety of his party, were his ruling objects; a revolution appeared a game of hazard, where the stake was the life of the losing party: the strenuous supporter of exterminating cruelty after the 10th August, he was among the first to recommend a return to humanity, after the period of danger was past.

Character of Danton.

1 Mig. i. 201, 202. Roland, ii. 14-17.

Robespierre possessed a very different character:

Character of Robespierre.

without the external energy of his rival, without his domineering character, or undaunted courage, he was endowed with qualities which ultimately raised him to the head of affairs. Though not splendid, his talents were of the most powerful kind: ungainly in appearance, with a feeble voice and vulgar accent, he owed his elevation chiefly to the inflexible obstinacy with which he maintained his opinions at a time when the popular cause had lost many of its supporters. Under the mask of patriotism was concealed the incessant influence of vanity and selfishness; cautious in conduct, slow, but implacable in revenge, he avoided the perils which proved fatal to so many of his adversaries, and ultimately established himself on their ruin. Insatiable in his thirst for blood, he disdained the more vulgar passion for money; at a time when he disposed of the lives of every man in France, he resided in a small apartment, the only luxury of which consisted in images of his figure, and the number of mirrors which, in every direction, reflected its form. While the other leaders of the populace affected a squalid dress, and dirty linen, he alone appeared in elegant attire. An austere life, a deserved reputation for incorruptibility, a total disregard of human suffering, preserved his ascendency with the fanatical supporters of liberty, even though he had little in common with them, and nothing grand or generous in his character. His terrible career is a proof how little in popular commotions even domineering vices are ultimately to be relied on; and how completely indomitable perseverance, and the incessant prosecution of selfish ambition, can supply the want of commanding qualities. The approach of death unveiled his real weakness; when success was hopeless, his firmness deserted him,[1] and

[1] Roland, i. 298. Barbaroux, 63, 64. Mig. i. 217. Hist. de la Conv. i. 74.

CHAP. VI. 1792. the assassin of thousands met his fate with less courage than the meanest of his victims.

Of Marat.

Marat was the worst of the triumvirate. Nature had impressed the atrocity of his character on his countenance: hideous features, the expression of a demon, revolted all who approached him. For more than three years his writings had incessantly stimulated the people to cruelty; buried in obscurity, he revolved in his mind the means of augmenting the victims of the Revolution. In vain repeated accusations were directed against him; flying from one subterraneous abode to another, he still continued his infernal agitation of the public mind. His principles were, that there was no safety but in destroying the whole enemies of the Revolution; he was repeatedly heard to say, that there would be no security to the state till 280,000 heads had fallen. The Revolution produced many men who carried into execution more sanguinary measures; none who exercised so powerful an influence in recommending them. Death cut him short in the midst of his relentless career; the hand of female heroism prevented his falling a victim to the savage exasperation which he had so large a share in creating.[1]

[1] Barbaroux, 57. Garat, 174, 187. Lac. i. 281. Mig. i. 220.

The influence of these leaders was speedily felt in the measures which were adopted by the municipality of Paris. Robespierre generally presented their petitions to the Assembly. "Blood," he exclaimed at the bar, "has not yet flowed; the people remain without vengeance. No sacrifice has yet been offered to the manes of those who died on the 10th August. And what have been the results of that immortal day; a tyrant has been suspended; why is he not dethroned and punished? You speak of bringing

to judgment the conspirators of the 10th August; CHAP. VI. 1792.
that is too slow a way of wreaking the national vengeance; the punishment of some is nothing, when others escape; they should all be punished, and by judges created specially for the occasion.—The tranquillity of the people," said he, at another time, "depends on the punishment of the guilty; and what have you done to effect it? Your decree is manifestly insufficient. It is neither sufficiently extensive nor explicit; for it speaks only of the crimes of the 10th August; and the crimes against the Revolution are of much older date. Under that expression the traitor La Fayette could escape the punishment due to his guilt. The people, moreover, will not endure that this new tribunal should preserve the forms hitherto observed. The appeal from one jurisdiction to another occasions an intolerable delay; it is absolutely necessary that the tribunal should be composed of deputies chosen from the sections, and that it should have the power of pronouncing, without appeal, the last punishment of the law."[1]

[1] Th. iii. 26. Lac. i. 281.

The Assembly in vain strove to resist these sanguinary demands. As they continued to temporize, the Commune sent them the most menacing messages, threatening to sound the tocsin at night, if the public vengeance was any longer delayed. "The people," it was said, "are tired of the delay of vengeance: beware of their taking the sword into their own hands. If within two hours the jury is not ready to convict, the most terrible calamities await Paris." Intimidated by these menaces, they appointed a tribunal for the trial of these offenders, the first model of the court afterwards so well known under the name of the Revolutionary Tribunal;[2] but though it immediately condemned several persons, its proceed-

17th Aug. Institution of the Revolutionary Tribunal.

[2] Mig. i. 201. Lac. Pr. Hist. i. 277. Th. iii. 27.

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ings appeared tardy to the Commune, who had resolved upon the most terrible projects.

Plan for a massacre in the prisons.

The advance of the Prussians had occasioned the greatest agitation in the capital, and eminently favoured the savage designs of the demagogues. On the 20th August, Longwy was invested; on the 21st it capitulated; on the 30th the enemy appeared before Verdun, and the bombardment immediately commenced. Terror, the greatest instigator to cruelty, seized the minds of the populace; the executive council, composed of the ministers of state, met with the committee of general defence, to deliberate on the measures which should be pursued. Some proposed to await the enemy under the walls of Paris; others to retire to Saumur. "Are you not aware," said Danton, when his turn to speak came, "that France is governed by Paris, and that if you abandon the capital, you abandon yourselves and your country to the stranger? We must at all hazards maintain our position in this city. The project of fighting under its walls is equally inadmissible; the 10th August has divided the country into two parties, and the ruling force is too inconsiderable to give us any chance of success. My advice is, that to disconcert their measures, and arrest the enemy, we must strike terror into the royalists." The committee, who well understood the meaning of these ominous words, expressed their consternation: "Yes," said he, "I repeat it, we must strike terror." The committee declined to adopt the project; but Danton immediately laid it before the Commune, by whom it was readily embraced. He wished to impress the enemy with a sense of the energy of the Republicans, and to engage the multitude in such sanguinary measures, as, by rendering retreat impossible, gave them no chance of safety but in victory.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 202, 203. Lac. Pr. Hist. i. 284, 285. Th. iii. 44, 49.

The Assembly, panic-struck, was incapable of arresting the measures which were in progress. The Girondists, who had so often ruled its decisions, when the object was to assail the court, found themselves weak and unsupported, when the end was to restrain the people. Its benches were deserted; the energy of victory, the throng consequent on success, had passed to the other side. Incessantly speaking of restraining the Municipality, it never attempted any thing: the leaders of the Girondists were already threatened with proscription; Roland, the minister of the interior, Vergniaud, Guadet, and Brissot, were in hourly expectation of an accusation.[1] CHAP. VI. 1792. [1] Lac. Pr. Hist. i. 285.

On the 29th August the barriers were closed, and remained shut for forty-eight hours, so as to render all escape impossible; and on the 31st, and the 1st of September, domiciliary visits were made, by orders of the Commune, with a vast and appalling force; great numbers of all ranks were imprisoned, but the victims were chiefly selected from the noblesse, and the dissident clergy. To conceal the real designs of the Municipality, the citizens capable of bearing arms were at the same time assembled in the Champs de Mars, formed into regiments, and marched off for the frontier. The tocsin sounded, the *générale* beat, cannon were discharged; Tallien presented himself at the bar of the Assembly to give an account of the measures of the Commune. Vergniaud, and Henry Lanouè, had already denounced the sanguinary measures of that terrible body, but it was too late; the petitioners appeared with the tone and the arrogance of victors. "We have made domiciliary visits," he said. "Who ordered us to do so? Yourselves. We have arrested the refractory priests; they are securely confined. In a few days the 29th Aug. Barriers closed.

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soil of freedom shall be delivered from their presence. If you strike us, you immolate at the same time the people who gained the victory of July 14th, who consolidated their power on August 10th, and who will maintain what they have gained." Mean while, a tumultuous mob surrounded the Assembly; at the conclusion of every sentence, shouts of "Vive la Commune! Vivent nos bons Commissaires!" resounded through the hall; the mob burst into the interior, and defiled in a menacing manner before the tribune; subdued by so many dangers, it broke up without coming to any resolution, and the victory of the Municipality was complete.[1]

[1] Th. iii. 54. Mig. i. 204. Lac. Pr. Hist. i. 284, 288.

Energetic plans of Danton.

Encouraged by this success, the Commune proceeded, without farther hesitation, in their sanguinary measures. Danton directed their operations, and framed the lists of proscription, at the hotel of the minister of justice. He soon after appeared at the bar of the Assembly, to give an account of the measures taken to ensure the public safety. "A part of the people," he said, "have already set out for the frontiers; another is engaged in digging our intrenchments; and the third, with pikes, will defend the interior of the city. But this is not enough; you must send commissaries and couriers to rouse all France to imitate the example of the capital; we must pass a decree, by which every citizen shall be obliged, under pain of death, to serve in person against the common enemy." At this instant the tocsin began to sound, the cannon were discharged, and he immediately added, "The cannon which you hear is not the cannon of alarm; it is the signal to advance against our enemies; to conquer them, to crush them! What is required? Boldness! boldness! boldness!" These words, pronounced with a voice

of thunder, produced the most appalling impression; and a decree of the Commune was immediately proclaimed, announcing the urgent danger of the commonwealth, and commanding the whole citizens to repair armed to their several posts as soon as the cannon of alarm was heard.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 204. Lac. i. 288, 289. Th. ii. 61.

The utmost terror was excited in every part of Paris at these preparations. An uncertain feeling of horror prevailed; every one apprehended that some dismal catastrophe was approaching, though none knew where or on whom the stroke was to fall. All the public authorities, the Assembly, the Municipality, the Sections, the Jacobins, had declared their sittings permanent. The whole city was in consternation, but the greatest alarms prevailed in the prisons. In the Temple, the royal family, who had so much reason to apprehend danger from the public convulsion, eagerly asked what had given rise to the unusual noise in the streets; while, at all the other prisons, the anxious looks of the jailers, and the unusual precaution of removing all the knives in use at dinner, told but too plainly that some bloody project was in contemplation.[2]

[2] Th. iii. 61, 62.

Massacre in the prisons.

At two in the morning, on the 2d September, the signal was given; the *générale* beat, the tocsin sounded, and the citizens of all ranks joined their respective banners. The victors, and the vanquished, on the 10th August, appeared in the same ranks; so completely had the crisis of national danger, and the agitation of the moment, drowned even the fiercest domestic discord. A powerful auxiliary force was thus provided for the armies, which was instantly despatched towards the frontiers, while the relentless Municipality was rapidly organizing the work of destruction in the capital, now stripped of its most energetic citizens.[3]

[3] Mig. i. 204. Lac. i. 209. Th. iii. 62.

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The whole prisons of Paris had been filled with several thousand persons, arrested during the domiciliary visits of the preceding days. A band of 300 assassins, directed and paid by the magistrates, assembled round the doors of the Hôtel de Ville. Ardent spirits, liberally furnished by the magistrates, augmented their natural ferocity. Money was supplied to those who appeared behind their comrades in determination, and the savage band marched through the streets singing Revolutionary songs. Robespierre, Billaud Varennes, and Collot d'Herbois, alternately harangued the multitude: "Magnanimous people," exclaimed the last, "you march to glory; how unfortunate are we to be unable to follow your steps; how the audacity of our enemies will increase when they no longer behold the conquerors of the 10th August. Let us at least not become responsible for the murder of your wives and children, which the conspirators are preparing, even in the prisons, where they are expecting their deliverers." Roused by these words, the mob became ready for every atrocity; and answered the discourse with repeated cries for the death of the imprisoned victims.[1]

[1] Lac. i. 290. Th. i.i. 75. Mig. i. 204.

Of the Abbaye.

The prison of the Abbaye was the first to be assailed. The unhappy inmates of this gloomy abode had for some days been alarmed by the obscure hints of their jailers; at length, at three o'clock, on the morning of the 2d September, the increased clamour, and the shouts of the multitude, announced that their last hour was arrived.[2]

[2] Saint Meard, 22.

Four-and-twenty priests, placed under arrest for refusing to take the new oaths, were in custody at the Hôtel de Ville. They were removed in six coaches to the prison of the Abbaye, amidst the yells and execrations of the mob; and no sooner had they

arrived there, than they were surrounded by a furious multitude, headed by Maillard, armed with spears and sabres, dragged out of their vehicles into the inner court of the prison, and there pierced by an hundred weapons.

The cries of these victims, who were hewn to pieces by the multitude, first drew the eyes of the prisoners to the fate which awaited themselves; seized separately, and dragged before an inexorable tribunal, they were speedily turned out to the vengeance of the populace. Reding was one of the first to be selected; the pain of his wounds extorted cries even from that intrepid Swiss soldier as he was hurried along, and one of the assassins drew his sword across his throat, and he perished before reaching the judges. The forms of justice were prostituted to the most inhuman massacre; torn from their dungeons, the prisoners were hurried before a tribunal, where the president Maillard sat by torch-light with a drawn sabre before him, and his robes drenched with blood; officers with drawn swords, and shirts stained with gore, surrounded the chair. A few minutes, often a few seconds, disposed of the fate of each individual; dragged from the pretended judgment hall, they were turned out to the populace, who thronged round the doors armed with sabres, panting for slaughter, and with loud cries demanding a quicker supply of victims. No executioners were required; the people despatched the condemned with their own hands, and sometimes enjoyed the savage pleasure of beholding them run a considerable distance before they expired. Immured in the upper chambers of the building, the other prisoners endured the agony of witnessing the prolonged sufferings of their comrades; a dreadful thirst added to their

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tortures, and the inhuman jailers refused even a draught of water to their earnest entreaties. Some had the presence of mind to observe in what attitude death soonest relieved its victims, and resolved, when their hour arrived, to keep their hands down, lest, by warding off the strokes, they should prolong their sufferings.[1]

[1] Saint Meard, 22, 30, 40. Th. iii. 64, 65, 66. Peltier's Mémoires, xi. 26.

The populace, however, in the court of the Abbaye, complained that the foremost only got a stroke at the prisoners, and that they were deprived of the pleasure of murdering the aristocrats. It was in consequence agreed, that those in advance should only strike with the backs of their sabres, and that the wretched victims should be made to run the gauntlet through a long avenue of murderers, each of whom should have the satisfaction of striking them before they expired. The women in the adjoining quarter of the city made a formal demand to the Commune for lights to see the massacres, and a lamp was in consequence placed near the spot where the victims issued, amidst the shouts of the spectators. Benches, under the charge of sentinels, were next arranged "*Pour les Messieurs*," and another "*Pour les Dames*," to witness the spectacle. As each successive prisoner was turned out of the gate, yells of joy rose from the multitude, and when he fell they danced like cannibals round his remains.[2]

[2] Abbé Sicard, 112, 116, 134. Rév Mém. xlvi.

Billaud Varrennes soon after arrived, wearing his magisterial scarf. Mounted on a pile of dead, he harangued the people amidst this infernal scene:—

Speech of Billaud Varennes to the murderers.

"Citizens, you have exterminated some wretches; you have saved your country; the Municipality is at a loss how to discharge its debt of gratitude towards you. I am authorized to offer each of you twenty-four francs, which shall be instantly paid. [Loud

applause.] Respectable citizens, continue your good work, and acquire new titles to the homage of your country! But let no unworthy action soil your hands: You dishonour this glorious day, if you engage in any meaner work: Abstain from pillage; the Municipality shall take care that your claims on them are discharged. Be noble, grand, and generous, worthy of the task you have undertaken: Let every thing on this great day be fitting the sovereignty of the people, who have committed their vengeance to your hands." The assassins were not slow in claiming their promised reward; stained with blood and bespattered with brains, with their swords and bayonets in their hands, they soon thronged the doors of the committee of the Municipality, who were at a loss for funds to discharge their claims. "Do you think I have only earned twenty-four francs?" said a young baker, armed with a massy weapon; "*I have slain forty with my own hands.*" At midnight the mob returned, threatening instant death to the whole committee if they were not forthwith paid; with the sabre at his throat, a member of the Municipality advanced the half of the sum required, and the remainder was paid by Roland, the minister of the interior. The names of the assassins, and the sum they received, are still to be seen written with blood, in the registers of the section of the Jardin des Plantes, of the Municipality, and of the Section of Unity.[1] *

[1] Rév. Mémoires, xlvi. 338, 339. Abbé Sicard, 134, 135. Th. iii. 74, 75.

The dignity of virtue, the charms of beauty, were alike lost upon the multitude. Among the rest, they seized on the humane and enlightened M. Sicard,

* Besides these sums, there is inscribed on the books of the Municipality the advance of 1463 francs, on September 4, to the assassins.—THIERS, iii. 75.

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teacher of the Deaf and Dumb, the tried friend of the poorer classes. He would have been instantly murdered, though his character was known, had not a courageous watchmaker, of the name of Monnot, rushed between, and stayed the lance, already raised to be plunged in his bosom. In the midst of the massacres, Mademoiselle de Sombrieul, eighteen years of age, threw herself on her father's neck, who was beset by the assassins, and declared they should not strike him but through her body. In amazement at her courage, the mob paused, and one of the number presented her with a cup filled with blood, exclaiming, "Drink! it is the blood of the aristocrats!" promising, if she drank it off, to spare his life. She did so, and he was saved. Mademoiselle Cazotte, of still younger years, sought out her aged parent in prison during the tumult; when the guards came to drag him before the tribunal, she clung so firmly to his neck, that it was found impossible to separate them; and she succeeded in softening the murderers; but he perished a few days afterwards with the courage of a martyr, and his heroic daughter only learned his fate upon being subsequently liberated from confinement.[1]

[1] Rév. Mémoires, xlvi. 76, 77. Sicard, 105. Th. iii. 71.

Massacre in the prison of Carmes.

Similar tragedies took place at the same time in all the other jails of Paris, and in the religious houses, which were filled with victims. In the prison of the Carmes, above 200 of the clergy were assembled; in the midst of them was the Archbishop of Arles, venerable for his years and his virtues, and several other prelates. Arranged round the altar, they heard the cries of the assassins, who clamoured at the gates; a few, yielding to the dictates of terror, had escaped, and were beyond the reach of danger, when, struck with shame at deserting their

brethren in such an extremity, they returned, and shared their fate. Awed by the sublimity of the scene, the wretches hastened the work of destruction, lest the hearts of the spectators should be softened ere the massacre began; the Archbishop of Arles repeated the prayer for those in the agonies of death, and they expired, imploring forgiveness for their murderers. Many were offered their life on condition of taking the Revolutionary oaths; all refused, and died in the faith of their fathers. Among the slain were several curates, who had been eminent for their charity in the dreadful famine of 1789; they received death from the hands of those whom they had saved from its horrors.[1]

[1] Lac. Pr. Hist. i. 290, 291. Th. iii. 64, 65, 74, 75.

The fate of the Princess Lamballe was particularly deplorable. Tenderly attached to the Queen, she at first, at her own desire, shared her captivity, but was afterwards, by orders of the Municipality, separately confined in the Petite Force. When the assassins arrived at her cell, she was offered her life if she would swear hatred to the King and Queen; she refused, and was instantly struck down. One of her domestics, whom she had loaded with benefits, gave the first blow. Her graceful figure was instantly torn in pieces, the fragments put on the end of pikes, and paraded through different parts of the city. The head, raised on a lance, was first carried to the palace of the Duke of Orleans, who rose from dinner, and smiled at the ghastly spectacle; it was next conveyed to the Temple, and paraded before the windows of Louis XVI. Ignorant of what had passed, and attracted by the noise, the King, at the desire of one of the commissioners of the Municipality, proceeded to the window, and, by the beautiful hair, recognised the bloody remains of his once lovely friend;[2] another

Death of the Princess Lamballe.

[2] Lac. Pr. Hist. i. 393. Rév. Mémoires, xlvi. 71. Th. iii. 8.

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commissioner, of more humane feelings, tried to prevent him from beholding it. Afterwards, the King was asked if he remembered the name of the soldier who had showed such barbarity: "No," he replied; "but perfectly the name of him who showed sensibility." *

It is a singular circumstance, worthy of being recorded, as characteristic of the almost inconceivable state of the human mind during such convulsions, that many of the assassins who put the prisoners to death, showed themselves, on some occasions, feelingly alive to the warmest sentiments of humanity. M. Journiac was fortunate enough, by a combination of presence of mind and good fortune, to obtain an acquittal from the terrible tribunal; two individuals, strangers to him, pressed his foot to mark when he should speak, and when acquitted, bore him safe under the arch of spears and sabres through which he had to pass. He offered them money when they had arrived at a place of safety; they refused, and, after embracing him, returned to the work of destruction. Another prisoner, saved in a similar manner, was conducted home with the same solicitude; the murderers, still reeking with the carnage they had committed, insisted on being spectators of the meeting of him and his family; they wept at the scene, and immediately went back with renewed alacrity to the

* It is sometimes not uninstructive to follow the career of the wretches who perpetrate such crimes to their latter end. "In a remote situation," says the Duchess of Abrantes, "on the sea-coast, lived a middle-aged man, in a solitary cottage, unattended by any human being. The police had strict orders from the First Consul to watch him with peculiar care. He died of suffocation, produced by an accident which had befallen him when eating, uttering the most horrid blasphemies, and in the midst of frightful tortures. He had been the principal actor in the murder of the Princess Lamballe."—D'ABRANTES, iii. 264.

scene of death. It would seem as if in that convulsive state all strong emotions rapidly succeed each other in the human breast; and the mind, wrought up as by the interest of a tragedy, is prepared alike for the most savage deeds of cruelty, or the tenderest emotions of pity.[1]

[1] Th. iii. 73, 74. St. Meard Rév. Mémoires, xlvi. 349.

Above five thousand persons perished in the different prisons of Paris during these massacres, which continued, with no interruption, from the 2d to the 6th September. When the other captives were all destroyed, the assassins, insatiable in their thirst for blood, besieged the Bicêtre, containing several thousand prisoners confined for ordinary offences, having no connexion with the state. They defended themselves with such resolution, that it became necessary to employ cannon for their destruction. But the multitude were resolutely bent on blood, and continued the contest, by unceasingly bringing up fresh forces, till the felons were overpowered, and all put to death. At length the murders ceased, from the complete exhaustion of its victims. Their remains were thrown into trenches, previously prepared by the Municipality for their reception; they were subsequently conveyed to the catacombs, where they were built up, and still remain the monument of crimes unfit to be thought of, even in the abodes of death, which France would willingly bury in oblivion.[2]

[2] Lac. Pr. Hist. i. 295. Th. iii. 83. Scott, ii. 47.

During the crusade against the Albigeois, in the south of France, four hundred men and women were publicly burnt at Carcassonne, to "the great joy of the crusading warriors."[3] When the Athenian democracy extinguished the revolt in the island of Mytelene, they passed a decree, ordering the whole vanquished people, with their offspring, to be put to death.[4]

[3] Sismondi, vi. 397.

[4] Thucydides, i. 250, 256.

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When the Irish soldiers in Montrose's army were made prisoners, after the battle of Philiphaugh, they were thrown, with their wives and children, from the bridge of Linlithgow, in Scotland; and the Patriot bands stood on the banks of the river with uplifted halberds, and massacred such of the helpless innocents as were thrown undrowned upon the shore.[1] Cruelty is not the growth of any particular country; it is not found in a greater degree in France than it would be in any other state similarly situated. It is the unchaining the passions of the multitude which in all ages produces this effect.

[1] Chambers' Rebellions of Scotland, iii. 37.

During these terrific scenes, the National Assembly, how anxious soever to arrest the disorders, could do nothing; the Ministry were equally impotent; the terrible Municipality ruled triumphant. At the worst period of the massacres, the legislature was engaged in discussing a decree for the coining of money. When the slaughter of the priests at the prison of Carmes could no longer be concealed, they sent a deputation to endeavour to save the victims, but they only succeeded in rescuing one. On the following day, the Commissioners of the Magistracy appeared at the bar of the Assembly, and assured the deputies that Paris was in the most complete tranquillity, though the murders continued for four days afterwards. The national guard, divided in opinion, hesitated to act; and Santerre, their new commander, refused to call them out. Roland alone had the courage in the Assembly to exert his talents in the cause of humanity.[2] A few days afterwards, the eloquence of Vergniaud roused the legislature from their stupor; and he had the resolution to propose, and the influence to carry, a decree, rendering the members of the Municipality responsible, with their heads, for the safety of their prisoners.

Feeble conduct of the Assembly.

[2] Lac. i. 295, 296. Hist de France, ix. 369. Mig. i. 205. Th. iii. 76, 77, 79.

The small number of those who perpetrated these murders in the French capital under the eyes of the legislature, is one of the most instructive facts in the history of revolutions. Marat had long before said, that with 200 assassins at a louis a-day, he would govern France, and cause 300,000 heads to fall; and the events of the 2d September seemed to justify the opinion. The number of those actually engaged in the massacres did not exceed 300; and twice as many more witnessed and encouraged their proceedings; yet this handful of men governed Paris and France, with a despotism which 300,000 armed warriors afterwards strove in vain to effect. The immense majority of the well-disposed citizens, divided in opinion, irresolute in conduct, and dispersed in different quarters, were incapable of arresting a band of assassins, engaged in the most atrocious cruelties of which modern Europe has yet afforded an example;—an important warning to the strenuous and the good in every succeeding age, to combine for defence the moment that the aspiring and the desperate have begun to agitate the public mind; and never to trust that mere smallness of numbers can be relied on for preventing reckless ambition from destroying irresolute virtue.[1]

[1] Barbar. 57. Louvet, Rév. Mém. xlvi. 73.

It is not less worthy of observation, that these atrocious massacres took place in the heart of a city where above fifty thousand men were enrolled in the national guard, and had arms in their hands; a force specifically destined to prevent insurrectionary movements, and support, under all changes, the majesty of the law. They were so divided in opinion, and the Revolutionists composed so large a part of their number, that nothing whatever was done by them, either on the 10th August, when the King was de-

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throned, or the 2d September, when the prisoners were massacred. This puts in a forcible point of view the weakness of such a body, which, being composed of citizens, is distracted by their feelings, and actuated by their passions. In ordinary times, it may exhibit an imposing array, and be adequate to the repression of the smaller disorders; but it is paralysed by the events which throw society into convulsions, and generally fails at the decisive moment when its aid is most required.

Invitation of the Commune of Paris to other massacres in France.

The Municipality of Paris wrote an infernal circular to the other cities of France, inviting them to imitate the massacres of the capital; but none obeyed the summons. The prisoners of Orleans had been despatched to Paris; the emissaries of the Convention met them at Versailles, where they were all murdered, with the exception of three, left for dead amongst the slain, and saved during the night by the humanity of some women. The virtuous and enlightened Larochefoucault was arrested in his carriage, and massacred on the spot, in the arms of his wife and mother.[1] *

[1] Lac. i. 296, 298. Th. iii. 127.

* The circular sent on this occasion by the Municipality of Paris to the other cities of France, is one of the most curious historical monuments of the Revolution. It concluded with these words:—"Being informed that hordes of barbarians were advancing against it, the Municipality of Paris lose no time in informing its brethren in all the other departments, that a part of the conspirators confined in the prisons has been put to death by the people; an act of justice which appeared indispensable, to retain in due subjection the legions of traitors within its walls, at the moment when the principal forces of the city were about to march against the enemy. Without doubt, the nation at large, after the long series of treasons, which have brought it to the edge of the abyss, will adopt the same means at once so useful and so necessary; and all the French will be able to say, like the people of Paris—We march against the enemy, and we leave none behind us to murder our wives and children." (Signed) "Duplain, Panis, Sergent, Lenfent, Marat, Lefort, Jordeuil, Administrators of the Committee of Surveillance, established at the Mayor's."—See THIERS, iii. 85. 86.

The plunder arising from the property of so many victims, procured immense wealth to the Municipality of Paris. Not only was the plate of the churches, and all the movables of the emigrants, seized by their orders, but the whole effects of the victims massacred in the prisons, were, by them, put under sequestration, and deposited in the vast warehouses belonging to the Committee of Surveillance.

Enormous plunder by the Municipality of Paris.

Neither the Assembly, nor the Convention, nor any other authority, ever could obtain from them either an account of the amount of this plunder, or how it was disposed of. The magistrates went a step farther, and, of their own authority, sold the furniture of all the great hotels, on which the national seal had been put, in consequence of the emigration of their proprietors. The minister of the interior was unable to prevent these scandalous abuses: all the inferior agents of authority were in the interest of the Municipality; and the national guards, remodelled under the title of armed sections, and composed of the most worthless classes, were in a state of complete disorganization. One night, the jewel-office, in the Tuileries, was pillaged, and all the splendid ornaments of the crown disappeared for ever. The seals affixed on the locks were removed, but no marks of violence appeared on them; which clearly showed the abstraction was done by order of the authorities, and not by popular violence. One of the finest jewels afterwards appeared in the hands of Sergent, one of the committee who signed the circular, calling upon the rest of France to imitate the massacres of the prisons in Paris. Such were the first effects of the popular election of a magistracy in the French capital.[1]

[1] Th. iii. 129, 131.

It was in the midst of these horrors that the Legislative Assembly drew to its termination. Its history

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Termination of the Legislative Assembly.

is full of interest to those who study the workings of the human mind in periods of national convulsion. Its opening was preceded by a deceitful calm: the ambition of party, the fury of passion, seemed for a time to be stilled, and the monarch, hailed by the acclamations of the multitude, tasted for a few days the sweets of popular administration. The Constituent Assembly had declared the Revolution finished: the King had accepted the Constitution: the days of anarchy were supposed to be past. But those who "disturb the peace of all the world, can seldom rule it when 'tis wildest." It terminated in days of bloodshed and carnage; with an imprisoned King, an absent nobility, an insurgent people; preceded by the murder of the royalist, and with the axe suspended over the head of the patriotic class. The destruction which its measures brought upon the higher ranks, was speedily, by its successor, inflicted upon its own leaders. Such is the inevitable march of revolutions, when the passions of the multitude are brought into collision with the unsupported benevolence of the philanthropic, and vigour and unanimity are not displayed by the friends of order and the holders of property; when reason and justice are appealed to on one side, and selfish ambition arrayed on the other. With less discussion on abstract rights, and more attention to present dangers, with less speculation, and more action, it might have arrested the progress of the Revolution: a vigorous prosecution of the victory in the Champs de Mars, a charge of 500 horse in the place of the Carrousel, on August 10th, would have prevented the overthrow of the throne, and extinguished the reign of Robespierre.[1]

[1] Lac. Pr. Hist. i. 108. & Hist. France, ix. 149, 230.

The NATIONAL CONVENTION began under darker auspices. The 10th August had given the ascendant

of victory to the democratical class; the great and inert mass of the people were disposed, as in all commotions, to range themselves on the victorious side. The sections of Paris, under the influence of Robespierre and Marat, returned the most revolutionary deputies; those of most other towns followed their example.[1] National Convention.

[1] Lac. i. 299.

The Jacobins, with their affiliated clubs, on this occasion, exercised an overwhelming influence over all France. The parent Club at Paris had, with this view, printed and circulated in every department, lists of all the votes passed during the Session, to instruct the electors. All the deputies who had voted against the desires of the popular party, and especially all such as had acquitted La Fayette, were particularly pointed out for rejection. At Paris, the violent leaders of the Municipality who had organized the revolt of August 10th, exercised an irresistible sway over the citizens. Robespierre and Danton were the first named, amidst unanimous shouts of applause; after these, Camille Desmoulins, Fabre d'Eglantine, David the celebrated painter, Collot d'Herbois, Billaud Varennes, Legendre, Panis, Sergent; almost all implicated in the massacres in the prisons, were also chosen. To these was added the Duke of Orleans, who had abdicated his titles, and was called Philippe Egalité.[2]

[2] Th. iii. 131, 133.

The first measure of the Convention was to abolish the monarchy, and proclaim a REPUBLIC. The calendar was changed: it was no longer the fourth year of liberty, but the first year of the French Republic. But no sooner were these great measures adopted than the fury of party broke out with redoubled violence: the contending factions seemed each desirous of placing itself at the head of the

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CHAP. VI. 1792. popular insurrection, recently become the ruling power. These two parties were the Girondists, and the Jacobins. Their strife soon assumed an envenomed character: their principles were utterly incompatible: life, or death, hung on the issue of the struggle.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 212. Lac. Pr. Hist. ii. 5. Th. iii. 150.

Character of the Girondists.

The Girondists were the philosophers of the Revolution. Their ideas were often grand and generous, drawn from the heroes of Greece and Rome, or the more enlarged philanthropy of modern times; their language ever indulgent and seducing to the people; their principles those which gave its early popularity, and its immense celebrity, to the Revolution. But they judged of mankind by a false standard: their ruinous error consisted in supposing that the multitude could be regulated by the motives which influenced the austere patriots, whom they numbered among their own body. An abstract sense of justice, a passion for general equality, a repugnance for violent governments, distinguished their speeches; but yet from their innovations has sprung the most oppressive tyranny of modern times, and they were at last found joining in many measures of the most flagrant iniquity. The dreadful war which ravaged Europe for twenty years was provoked by their declamations; the death of the King, the overthrow of the throne, the Reign of Terror, flowed from the principles which they promulgated. It is no apology for such conduct, to allege that they were sincere in their desire for a Republic, and the happiness of France: the common proverb, that "Hell is paved with good intentions," shows how generally perilous conduct, even when flowing from pure motives, is found to lead to the most disastrous consequences. They were too often, in their political career, reckless and inconsiderate; and thence their eloquence and genius only rendered them the more dangerous, from the multitudes

who were influenced by such alluring expressions. Powerful in raising the tempest, they were feeble and irresolute in allaying it: invincible in suffering, heroic in death, they were destitute of the energy and practical experience requisite to avert disaster. The democrats supported them, as long as they urged forward the Revolution, and became their bitterest enemies, as soon as they strove to allay its fury. They were constantly misled, by expecting that intelligence was to be found among the lower orders; that reason and justice would prevail with the multitude; and as constantly disappointed by experiencing the invariable ascendant of passion or interest among their popular supporters;—the usual error of elevated and generous minds, and which so frequently unfits them for the actual administration of affairs. Their tenets would have led them to support the constitutional throne, but they were unable to stem the torrent of democratical fury, which they themselves had excited, and compelled, to avert still greater disasters, to concur in many cruel measures, alike contrary to their wishes and their principles. The leaders of this party were Vergniaud, Brissot, and Roland; men of powerful eloquence, generous philanthropy, and Roman firmness; who knew how to die, but not to live; who perished, because they wanted the audacity and wickedness requisite for success in a Revolution.[1]

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[1] Mig. i. 213, 214. Buzot, 84.

The radical and inherent vice of this party was their irreligion; and the dreadful misfortunes in which they involved their country, proves how inadequate the most splendid talents are to the management of human affairs, or the right discharge of social duty, without that overruling principle. With all their love of justice, they declared Louis guilty; with all their humanity, they voted for his death. The peasants of La Vendée, who trusted only to the

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rule of duty prescribed in their religion, were never betrayed in the same manner into acts for which no apology can be found. Whenever statesmen abandon the plain rules of duty and justice, and base their conduct on the quicksands of supposed expedience, they are involved in a series of errors, which quickly precipitate them into the most serious crimes. But the greatest efforts of human wisdom or virtue are unequal to direct or sustain the mind in the trying scenes which a Revolution induces: it is the belief of futurity, and a sense of religion alone, which can support humanity in such calamities; and their want of such principles rendered all the genius and philanthropy of the Girondists of no practical avail in stemming the disasters of the Revolution.[1]

[1] Hist. de la Conv. i. 142, 143.

The Girondists had no point of assemblage, like the well-disciplined forces of their adversaries; but their leaders frequently met at the parties of Madame Roland, where all the elegance which the Revolution had left, and all the talent which it had developed, were wont to assemble. This remarkable woman, by the concurring testimony of all her contemporaries, exercised a powerful influence over the fortunes of her country. The fire of her genius, the warmth of her feelings, the eloquence of her language, enabled her to maintain an undisputed ascendency even over the greatest men in France. She lived to lament the crimes perpetrated in the name of liberty, and died a victim to her conjugal fidelity; evincing, in her last moments, a degree of intrepidity rarely paralleled even in the annals of female heroism, and which, had it been general in her party, might have stifled the Reign of Terror in its birth.[2]

[2] Lac. ii. 14, 15. Roland, i. 18, 19.

Character of Vergniaud.

Vergniaud was the most eloquent speaker of the Gironde, but he had not the vigour or resolution requisite for the leader of a party in troubled times.

Passion, in general, had little influence over his mind: he was humane, gentle, and benevolent; difficult to rouse to exertion, and still more to be convinced of the wickedness, either of his adversaries, or a large part of his supporters. But when great occasions arose, and the latent energy of his mind was roused, he poured forth his generous thoughts in streams of eloquence, which never have been equalled in the French Assembly. It was not like that of Mirabeau, broken, and emphatic, adapted to the changing temper of the audience he addressed; but uniformly elegant, sonorous, and flowing, swelling at times into the highest strains of empassioned oratory. That such a man should have been unable to rule the Convention, only proves how unfit a body, elected as they were, is to rule the destinies of a great nation.[1] CHAP. VI. 1792. [1] Th. iii. 137, 138.

Guadet was more animated than Vergniaud: he seized with more readiness the changes of the moment, and preserved his presence of mind more completely during the stormy discussions of the Assembly. Gensonne, with inferior talents for speaking, was nevertheless looked up to as a leader of his party from his firmness and resolution of character. Guadet. Barbaroux, a native of the South of France, brought to the strife of faction the ardent temperament of his sunny climate; resolute, sagacious, and daring, he early divined the bloody designs of the Jacobins, but was unable to prevail on his associates to adopt the desperate measures which he soon foresaw would be necessary to give them any thing like an equality in the strife.[2] Barbaroux. [2] Th. iii. 138, 139.

Very different was the character of the JACOBINS, that terrible faction, whose crimes have stained the annals of France with such unheard-of atrocities. Their origin draws back to the struggles in 1789, when a certain number of deputies from the pro- Of the Jacobins.

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vinces met in the convent of the Jacobins, formerly the seat of the Assemblies of the League. The popularity of the club soon attracted the most audacious and able of the democratic party: the nave of the church was transformed into a hall for the meeting of the members; and the seat of the President made of the top of a Gothic monument of black marble, which stood against the walls. The tribune, from whence the orators addressed the Assembly, consisted of two beams placed across each other like a half-constructed scaffold; behind it were suspended from the walls the ancient instruments of torture, the unattended to, but fitting accompaniments of such a scene; numbers of bats at night flitted through its vast and gloomy vaults, and by their screams interrupted the din of the meeting. Such was the strife of contending voices, that muskets were discharged at intervals to produce a temporary cessation of the tumult. A great number of affiliated societies in all the great towns of France, early gave this club a decided preponderance: the eloquence of Mirabeau thundered under its roof; and all the principal insurrections of the Revolution were prepared by its leaders.[1]

[1] Toul. ii. 232; & v. 137. Chateaub. Mem. 76.

The revolts of the 14th July, the 20th June, and the 10th August, were openly discussed, long before they took place, in the hall of the Jacobins; there were rehearsed all the great changes of the drama which were shortly afterwards to be acted in the Assembly. The massacres of 2d September alone appear to have been unprepared by them; their infamy rests with Danton and the Municipality of Paris. As usual in democratic assemblies, the most violent and outrageous soon acquired an ascendency; the mob applauded those who were loudest in their assertion of the sovereignty of the people.

Fifteen hundred members usually attended its meetings; a few lamps only lighted the vast extent of the room; the members appeared for the most part in shabby attire, and the galleries were filled with the lowest of the populace. In this den of darkness were prepared the bloody lists of proscription and massacre; the meetings were opened with revolutionary songs, and shouts of applause followed each addition to the list of murder, each account of its perpetration by the affiliated societies. Never was a man of honour, seldom a man of virtue, admitted within this society; it had a secret horror for every one who was not attached to its fortunes by the hellish bond of committed wickedness. A robber, an assassin, was certain of admission; as sure as the victim of their violence was of rejection. The well-known question put to the entrants, "What have you done to be hanged, if the ancient *régime* is restored?" exemplifies at once the bond which held them together. Their place of meeting was adorned with anarchical symbols, tricolor flags, and busts of the leading revolutionists of former times. Long before the death of Louis XVI., two portraits, adorned with garlands, of Jacques Clement and Ravaillac, were hung on the walls; immediately below was the date of the murder which each had committed, with the words, "He was fortunate; he killed a king." Inferior to their adversaries in learning, eloquence, and taste, they were infinitely their superiors in the arts of popularity; they succeeded with the mob, because they knew by experience the means of moving the mass from which they sprung. Reason, justice, humanity, were never appealed to; flattery, agitation, and terror, constituted their never-failing methods of seduction. The extreme of democracy was the form

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of government which they supported, because it was most grateful to the indigent class on whom they depended; but nothing was farther from their intentions than to share with others the power which they so strenuously sought for themselves. The greatest levellers in theory, they became the most absolute tyrants in practice; having nothing to lose, they were utterly reckless in their measures of aggrandizement; restrained by no feelings of conscience, they reaped for a time the fruits of audacious wickedness. The leaders of this party were Danton, Marat, Robespierre, Billaud Varennes, St Just, and Collot d'Herbois; names destined to acquire an execrable celebrity in French annals, whose deeds will never be forgotten so long as the voice of conscience is heard in the human heart, who have done more to destroy the cause of freedom than all the tyrants who have preceded them.[1]

[1] Toul. v. 139. Lac. ii. 10. Mig. i. 214. Buzot, 72, 84. Hist. de la Conv. i. 110, 112. Chateaub. Mem. 76.

From the first opening of the Convention, the Girondists occupied the right, and the Jacobins the seats on the summit of the left; whence their designation of "The Mountain" was derived. The former had the majority of votes, the greater part of the departments having returned men of comparatively moderate principles. But the latter possessed a great advantage, in having on their side all the members of the city of Paris, who ruled the mob, always ready to crowd at their call round the doors of the Assembly, and in being supported by the Municipality, which had already grown into a ruling power in the state, and had become the great centre of the democratic party. A neutral body, composed of those members whose principles were not yet declared, was called the Plain of Marais; it ranged itself with the Girondists, until terror compelled its members to coalesce with the victorious side.[2]

[2] Mig. i. 215.

Connected with the parent Club of the Jacobins at Paris, were a multitude of affiliated societies in every considerable town of France; who trained up disciples for the parent establishment, disseminated its principles, and sent up continual supplies of energetic ambition to feed the flame in the capital. The Magistracy also had established relations with all the Municipalities of France, who, elected by almost universal suffrage, had generally fallen, as in all civil convulsions, into the hands of the most violent party. The Jacobins, therefore, ruled the whole effective power of the state; nothing remained to the Girondists but the Ministry, who, thwarted by the Municipality, had no authority in Paris. The army raised during the excitement of the Revolution, could not be trusted against the popular leaders; if it could, the distance at which it was placed, and its active occupation on the frontier, precluded it from being of any service in resisting the insurrections of the capital.[1]

Influence of the Jacobin Clubs in France.

[1] Mig. i. 216. Lac. ii. 10.

The two rival parties mutually indulged in recriminations, in order to influence the public mind. The Jacobins incessantly reproached the Girondists with desiring to dissolve the Republic; to establish three-and-twenty separate democratic states, held together, like the American provinces, by a mere federal union; and though this design was never seriously entertained by them, except when the advance of the Duke of Brunswick threatened to lead to the capture of Paris, the imprudent conversations of Brissot, and other leaders of the party, and the extravagant admiration which they always professed for the institutions of America, were sufficient to give a colour to the accusation. Nothing more was requisite to render them in the highest degree unpopular in

Mutual recriminations of the Girondists and Jacobins.

CHAP. VI. 1792. Paris, the very existence of which depended on its remaining, through all the phases of government, the seat of the ruling power. The Girondists retorted upon their adversaries charges better founded, but not so likely to inflame the populace. They reproached them with endeavouring to establish in the Municipality of Paris a power superior to the legislature of all France; with overawing the deliberations of the Convention, by menacing petitions, or the open display of brute force; and secretly preparing for their favourite leaders, Danton, Robespierre, and Marat, a triumvirate of power, which would speedily extinguish all the freedom which had been acquired. The first part of the accusation was well founded even then; of the last, time soon afforded an ample confirmation.[1]

[1] Th. iii. 142, 145.

Sept. 23. State of finances.

One of the first cares of the Convention was the state of the finances. From the report of M. Cambon, the minister of finance, it appeared that the preceding Assemblies had authorized the fabrication of two thousand seven hundred millions of assignats, or above L.130,000,000 sterling; a prodigious sum, to have been issued in three years of almost continued peace, and clearly demonstrating, that the revenue, from its ordinary sources, had almost entirely disappeared. Of this immense fund, however, only twenty-four millions remained. A new issue, therefore, became indispensable, and was immediately ordered, on the security of the national domains, which were continually increasing, and now embraced more than two-thirds of the landed property of France, from the continued confiscation of the estates of the emigrants.[2]

[2] Th. iii. 151.

A still more democratic constitution, than that framed by the Constituent and Legislative Assem-

blies, was at the same time established. All the requisites for election to any offices whatever, were, on the motion of the Duke of Orleans, abolished. It was no longer necessary to select judges from legal men, nor magistrates from the class of proprietors. All persons, in whatever rank, were declared eligible to every situation; and the right of voting in the Primary Assemblies conferred on every man above the age of twenty-one years. Absolute equality, in its literal sense, was universally established.[1] CHAP. VI. 1792. Sept. 24. [1] Th. iii. 150.

Roland, at the same time, gave a frightful picture of the massacres which the Jacobin emissaries had spread over all France. "The disorders of Paris," said he, "have been too faithfully imitated in the departments. It is not anarchy which is to be accused for these calamities, but tyrants of a new species, who have sprung up in our newly enfranchised France. It is from Paris that these daily incitements to murder proceed. How can we preserve the people from the most frightful misery, when so many citizens are obliged to remain in concealment for fear of their lives; when invitations to pillage, murder, rapine, and lists of proscription, daily appear on the walls of the capital? How shall we frame a constitution for France, if the Convention charged with it deliberates under the daggers of assassins?" After a vehement debate, a decree against the instigators to murder, and for the establishment of a departmental guard, was passed; but subsequent events prevented it from being ever carried into execution.[2] [2] Th. iii. 152, 155.

The Girondists, foreseeing the character of Robespierre, directed their first attacks against him. Osselin and Barbaroux publicly accused him of aspiring to the Dictatorship; but the leaders of their party, not yet aware of the necessity of vigorous Accusation of Marat by the Girondists.

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measures against so desperate an adversary, quashed the proceeding. Marat was next the object of accusation; a thrill of horror ran through the Convention when he appeared before them; the massacres which he had so strenuously recommended in his journal, "L'Ami du Peuple," were still fresh in the recollections of the deputies. Vergniaud read a number of that journal, where it was coldly calculated that 70,000 heads must fall before liberty could be established; the galleries openly applauded the proposal. Another of the Girondists soon after read another paper, published a few days before by the accused, in which he said, "One consideration alone overwhelms me, and that is, that all my efforts to save the people will come to nothing, without a new insurrection. When I behold the temper of the majority of the deputies in the National Convention, I despair of the public safety. If, during its eight first sittings, the foundations of a constitution are not laid, nothing more need be expected from its labours. Fifty years of anarchy await you, from which you will never emerge, but by the hands of a Dictator, a true patriot and statesman. Oh! misguided people, if you but knew how to act." At these words, furious cries interrupted the speaker; some applauding, others exclaiming, "To the Abbaye! to the guillotine!"[1]

[1] Mig. 218, 219. Lac. ii. 6, 8. Th. iii. 163.

Marat mounted the tribune to reply; it was the first time he had been seen there, and such was the horror at his aspect, that it was long before he could obtain a hearing. He acknowledged the writing to be his, however, and refused to disavow its contents. "To ask me to retract," he added, "is to insist that I should shut my eyes to what I see, and my ears to what I hear; there is no power on earth which can force me to such a change of ideas: I can answer

for the purity of my heart, but I cannot change my thoughts; they have sprung from the nature of things." The Jacobins, with tumultuous shouts, testified their applause; many irresolute members, horrorstruck at the proscriptions, but yet terrified at their authors, quitted the Assembly. The accused, perceiving his advantage, drew a pistol from his pocket: "Blush!" he exclaimed, "for your rashness, in thus accusing the patriots: If the proposal for an accusation be carried, I will blow out my brains at the foot of the tribune. Such is the reward of my labours, my sufferings, my misery, in the cause of the people!" The Convention concealed its fear under the mask of contempt, and, on the motion of Tallien, voted that the Republic was one and indivisible, and dismissed the accused unpunished, to reap the fruits of a real victory.[1]

[1] Lac. ii. 8, 9. Th. iii. 167, 170. Hist. de la Conv. i. 75, 76.

A more formidable accusation was shortly afterwards brought forward by Louvet, one of the ablest and most intrepid leaders of the Gironde. Roland, as minister of the interior, had made a luminous statement of the situation of the metropolis, in which he had boldly exposed the sanguinary measures of the Commune. "When the principles of revolt and carnage," said he, "are openly avowed and applauded, not only in clubs, but in the bosom of the Convention, who can doubt that some hidden partisans of the ancient *régime*, some pretended friends of the people, veiling their wickedness under the mask of patriotism, have conceived the design of overturning the constitution, and slaking their thirst for blood and gold in the midst of public ruin?" He then read a letter from the President of the second section of the Criminal Tribunal, announcing that his own life and that of his colleagues was menaced, and that, in

Louvet arraigns Robespierre.

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the language of the times, a *new bleeding* was required for the state. At this announcement, all eyes were turned to Robespierre, who immediately mounted the tribune, and exclaimed, "No one will dare to accuse me to my face."—"I am he who accuses you," said Louvet, with a firm voice and unshrinking eye: "Yes, Robespierre, I accuse you." The tyrant was moved at the glance of his adversary, whose talent and courage he had previously experienced in the hall of the Jacobins. Louvet then, in an energetic and eloquent speech, traced the character and actions of his opponent. He followed Robespierre to the Club of the Jacobins, the Municipality, the Electoral Assembly, eternally calumniating his adversaries, and flattering the mob; taking advantage of the passions of a blind multitude, urging it at pleasure to every excess; insulting in its name the majesty of the legislature, and compelling the sovereign power to issue the decrees he commanded, under the pain of rebellion; ordering, though unseen, the murders and robberies of September, to support the usurpation of the Municipality by means of terror; sending emissaries through all France to instigate the commission of similar crimes, and induce the provinces to follow the example, and obey the authority of Paris; incessantly occupied with his own praises, and magnifying the grandeur and power of the people from whom he sprung. "The glory of the revolt of the 10th August," he added, "is common to all; but the glory of the massacres of September 2d belongs to you. On you and your associates may they rest for ever. The people of Paris know how to combat, but not how to murder; they were seen in a body before the Tuileries on the glorious 10th August; but a few hundred assassins alone perpetrated the massacres of

September. The eloquence of Roland spoke in vain; the tutelary arm of Pétion was enchained; Danton refused to move; the presidents of the sections waited for orders from the general in command, which never arrived; the officers of the Municipality, with their official scarfs, presided at the executions; and the orders you had given were too fatally obeyed."[1]

[1] Mig. i. 224. Lac. ii. 17. Th. iii. 213.

Reply of Robespierre.

The Assembly was strongly moved by the eloquence of Louvet, but he was feebly supported by his friends among the Girondists. He repeatedly appealed to Pétion, Vergniaud, and the other leaders, to support his statements, but they had not the firmness to state boldly the truth. Had they testified a fourth part of what they knew, the accusation must have been instantly voted, and the tyrant strangled in his cradle. As it was, Robespierre, fearful of its effects, demanded eight days to prepare for his defence. In the interval, the whole engines of terror were put in force: The Jacobins thundered out accusations against the intrepid accuser, and all the leaders of the Mountain were indefatigable in their efforts to strike terror into their opponents. By degrees the impression cooled, and the accused mounted the tribune at its close with the air of a victor. The deputies came to regard the accusation as a private quarrel between Louvet and Robespierre, and felt no apprehension for a man whom they regarded, as Barere said, "as a man of the day—a little mover of discord."[2]

[2] Louvet, 52.

In the conclusion of his address, which was nervous and forcible, Robespierre observed, in allusion to the massacres of September 2d, "Without doubt," said he, "the massacres in the prisons were illegal; but what was the revolt on 10th August, or on 14th July? If we are to go back to what is *legal*,

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who can defend the Revolution? or save you all from a conviction for high treason? Beware how by such doctrines you cast a doubt on the origin of your own power. Without illegal measures despotism never yet was shaken, for what sovereign will establish legal forms for his own overthrow? It is said that an innocent individual has perished. The number of the sufferers has been greatly exaggerated; but supposing there was one, it was doubtless too much. He was perhaps a good citizen, one of our best friends. Weep for him—weep even for the unworthy citizens who have fallen under the sword of popular justice; but let your grief, as every human thing, have a termination. But let us, at the same time, reserve some tears for more touching calamities: Weep! an hundred thousand citizens sacrificed by tyranny! Weep! our fellow-citizens massacred in their cradle, or in the arms of their mothers! Have you no brothers or children, or wives, to revenge? The family of French legislators is their country, is the whole human race, excepting tyrants and their supporters. Weep, then, humanity debased under an odious yoke; but be consoled by the reflection, that by calming unworthy discord, you will secure the happiness of your own country, and prepare that of the world." Divided by opposite opinions, the Assembly willingly closed with the proposal of Robespierre to put an end to these personal altercations, and pass to the order of the day. Barbaroux and Lanjuinais vainly endeavoured to maintain the accusation; the leaders of the Gironde themselves, irresolute in action, hesitated to support them. "If, indeed," said Barere, "there existed in the Republic a man born with the genius of Cæsar, or the boldness of Cromwell; if there was to be found here a man with the talent of Sylla, and

his dangerous means of elevation; if we had amongst us a legislator of vast ability, boundless ambition, and profound dissimulation; a general, for example, returning loaded with laurels to dictate laws to your choice, or insult the rights of the people, I would be the first to propose against him a decree of accusation. But let us cease to waste our time on men who will fill no place in history; let us not put pigmies on pedestals; the civic crowns of Robespierre are mingled with cypress." They flattered themselves, that a simple passing to the order of the day would extinguish his influence as completely as exile or death, and actually joined with the Jacobins in preventing the reply of Louvet,[1]—a fatal error, which France had cause to lament in tears of blood.

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[1] Louvet, 56. Mig. i. 224. Th. iii. 229. Lac. ii. 18, 19.

It was now evident that the Girondists were no match for their terrible adversaries. The men of action on their side, Louvet, Barbaroux, and Lanjuinais, in vain strove to rouse them to the necessity of vigorous measures in contending with such enemies. Their constant reply was, that they would not be the first to commence the shedding of blood. Their whole vigour consisted in declamation, their whole wisdom in abstract discussion. Moderate in counsel, humane in intention, they were fitted to add to the prosperity of a republic in peace, but totally unequal to the task of guiding it in periods of agitation. They were too honourable to believe in the wickedness of their opponents, too scrupulous to adopt the measures requisite to crush them. When warned of the necessity of striking a decisive blow, they replied, with the most deplorable *sang froid*, that it was better not to irritate men of a violent temperament.[2] The only weapons they could be prevailed on to employ were reason and eloquence, while their adver-

[2] Louvet, 56, 57. Th. iii. 231.

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saries were daily sharpening their poniards. "It was easy to foresee," says Louvet, "what would be the issue of such a contest."

The Girondists propose to raise a guard for the Convention.

The measures of the Girondists, intended to support the constitution, and crush the ascendency of the Jacobin faction, were not more fortunate or ably directed than their accusations of individuals. Buzot proposed to establish a guard, specially for the protection of the Convention, drawn from young men chosen from the different departments. Barbaroux at the same time brought forward four decrees, ably conceived, which, if carried into execution, would have effectually overthrown the usurpations of the Municipality. By the first, the capital was to cease to be the seat of the legislature, when it lost its claim to their presence, by failing to protect them from insult. By the second, the troops of the Fédérés and the national cavalry were to be charged, along with the armed sections, with the protection of the legislature. By the third, the Convention was to constitute itself into a court of justice, for the trial of all conspirators against its authority. By the fourth, the Convention suspended the Municipality of Paris. This would have established an effectual counterpoise to the influence of the populace of Paris, and have been a decisive blow to the Jacobins and Municipality of that city. Robespierre combated the proposal with all his force. "Paris is now tranquil," said he. —"The blood of September 2d is yet reeking," replied Vergniaud: "The authority of the Convention is now universally respected. You yourself daily call it in question in your seditious assemblies, your sanguinary journals. Such a decree would be a libel on the people of Paris: They groan, as well as ourselves, under the assassins who oppress them. You

wish to create a tyranny: On the contrary, we strive to put an end to yours: You would establish a prætorian band: You rule by means of a horde of brigands: You are treading in the steps of Sylla: You have the ambition of Cromwell." These angry recriminations had no effect but to divert the Assembly from the importance of the real object at issue, and, fearful of present danger, they rejected the only means of avoiding it in future, by delivering themselves, unprotected, to the mob of the capital.[1] Thus the Ministry irritated the Jacobins, without crushing them, and manifested their distrust in the populace, without providing any counterpoise to their violence.

[1] Lac. ii. 12, 13. Mig. i. 225. Th. iii. 221.

Jacobins spread the report of a division of the Republic.

The Jacobins skilfully availed themselves of these impotent manifestations of distrust, to give additional currency to the report, that the Girondists intended to transport the seat of government to the Southern provinces. This rumour rapidly gained ground with the populace, and augmented their dislike at the Ministry. Their opponents, conscious of the falsehood of the accusation, treated it with contempt; a striking proof of their ignorance of the trifling foundations on which popular favour or dislike is founded. On every occasion the democrats pressed for a decree in favour of the unity and indivisibility of the Republic; thereby insinuating the belief that a federal union was contemplated by their adversaries; a project of all others the most unpopular in the central city of Paris, and afterwards productive of the most ruinous consequences to the moderate party.[2]

[2] Mig. i. 226. Th. iii. 229. Lac. ii. 14.

Preparations for the trial of Louis.

All these preliminary struggles were essays of strength by the two parties, prior to the grand question which was now destined to attract the eyes of

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Europe and of the world. This was the trial of Louis XVI.

The Jacobins had several motives for urging this measure. By placing the King's life in peril, they hoped to compel the Girondists openly to espouse his cause, and thereby ruin them without redemption in the eyes of the people; by engaging the popular party in so decisive a step, they knew that they would best preclude any chance of return to the royalist government. They were desirous, moreover, of taking out of the hands of the Girondists, and the moderate part of the Convention, the formation of a Republican government; and they were probably of opinion that the vengeance of the dead was less to be feared than that of the living; and that a dethroned King was a dangerous neighbour to an infant Democracy.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 227. Lac. ii. 20. Th. ii. 375.

Violent agitation commenced by the Jacobins.

To prepare the nation for this great event, and familiarize them with the tragedy in which it was intended to terminate, the most vigorous measures were taken by the Jacobins over all France. In their central club at Paris the question was repeatedly canvassed, and the most inflammatory harangues were delivered, on the necessity of striking a decisive blow against the royalist faction. The popular societies in the departments were stimulated to present addresses to the Convention, openly demanding the condemnation of the King. The sections of Paris imitated their example. Daily petitions were heard at the bar of the Assembly, praying for vengeance on the murderers of the 10th August, and for the death of the last tyrant. In the barbarous language of the age, the President had frequently promised satisfaction to the numerous petitioners who prayed, "De faire rouler la tête du Tyran;"[2] and in

[2] Lac. ii. 35. Mig. i. 227, 228.

many proclamations the monarch they were about to try had been already condemned by the Convention.

A discovery was at this juncture made in the Tuileries, which increased to a very high degree the popular discontent at the unfortunate Prince. In a cavity in the wall, behind a concealed iron door, were found a great variety of secret papers belonging to the court, placed there, as already mentioned, by order of Louis. Evidence was there discovered of the measures of Talon, the agreement with Mirabeau, the propositions of Bouillé, and many other secret transactions. Roland had the misfortune, by giving publicity to this discovery, to hasten the death of the sovereign he was desirous to save. The papers recovered threw a doubt on the consistency of many individuals on the popular side; but they in no degree implicated Louis in any sinister or unworthy design. They amounted merely to this, that the monarch, severely pressed by his enemies, and deserted by all the world, was desirous of strengthening his party, or received and entertained projects of deliverance from the most zealous of his adherents. But no trace was discovered of any intention on his part to subvert *the Constitution* he had sworn to maintain, or do more than extricate himself from the tyranny to which, in the pretended days of freedom, he was really subjected by the democratical faction.[1] And is the sovereign to be the only person in a free country who is to be denied the privilege of making those efforts in favour of his just rights, which are so zealously asserted for the meanest of his subjects?

Discovery of the Iron Closet in the Tuileries.

[1] Lac. ii. 33, 34. Mig. i. 229. Th. iii. 326, 327.

The charges brought against Louis were very numerous. Among others, he was accused of having written to the Bishop of Clermont, on 16th April,

CHAP. VI. 1791, "that if he recovered his power, he would re-
1792. store the clergy and the Constitution to their ancient state;" of having entertained designs of betraying his oaths and overturning the Revolution; of having corresponded with the emigrant faction, whose avowed object was the restoration of the ancient order of things.[1] Of all these grounds of complaint, it is sufficient to observe, that in so far as they were founded in fact, they were perfectly justifiable in the circumstances in which he was placed; but that the greater part were base calumnies, equally contradicted by his virtues and his irresolution; and that if he had really been actuated by the principles imputed to him, he never would have been reduced to the necessity of vindicating himself before a popular assembly.

[1] Mig. i. 228.

Preliminary point, Could Louis be tried?

The preliminary question which occupied the Assembly was, Whether Louis could be legally brought to trial before them? A committee, to whom the point was referred for investigation, reported in the affirmative. Mailhé, charged with delivering its report, maintained, "That the inviolability awarded to Louis by the constitution was as *King*, not as an *individual;* that the nation had supplied the inviolability of the sovereign by the responsibility of his ministers, and that where he had acted as an individual, and not through them, his protection was at an end; that his dethronement was not a punishment, but a change of government; that he was now amenable to the law against traitors and conspirators; finally, that the arraignment should be before the Convention, and not any inferior court, because, as it embraced all those interests which were centred in the maintenance of justice, it was impossible that that Supreme Tribunal could violate justice,[2] and

[2] Mig. i. 230.

therefore needless that it should be fettered by its forms."

When this report was received in the Assembly, a stormy discussion arose. The partisans of Louis, though obliged to profess themselves satisfied of his guilt, maintained "that the inviolability was general; that the constitution had not only provided for secret hostilities on his part, but open warfare, and in either alternative, had prescribed no other pain than dethronement; that the nation had placed him on the throne on these conditions; that the Convention was commissioned by the nation to change the government, but not to judge the sovereign; that if the rules of justice forbade his prosecution, much more did the usages of war, which permitted no severity to the vanquished but on the field of battle; that the Republic had no interest in his condemnation, but only in such measures as were called for by the public safety, which would be sufficiently secured by his detention or exile."

There were not wanting, however, some deputies who courageously supported a more humane opinion. "What," said Rauzet, "was the true situation of the King by the Constitution of 1791? He was placed in presence of the National Representation as a rival to it. Was it not natural that he should seek to recover as much as possible his lost authority? Did not you yourselves call him to enter upon that strife with the Legislative Body? In that contest he was overthrown, and he lies now alone and bound at the feet of twenty-five millions of men, and shall they have the baseness to murder the vanquished? Has not Louis repressed beyond any other man the eternal desire for power which is so strongly impressed in the human heart? Did he not, in 1789, voluntarily

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abandon a large part of his authority? Has he not abolished servitude in his domains, admitted philosophers into his councils, and even the empirics imposed upon him by the public voice? Does not France owe to him the convocation of the States-General, and the first establishment of its political rights?" The Girondists supported this opinion; the neutral party was inclined to adhere to the report of the committee.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 231. Th. iii. 295, 298, 305.

Debate on the subject in the Convention.

But the Jacobins openly avowed a more manly doctrine, if such an epithet can be fitly applied to severity towards a fallen enemy. "Citizens," said St Just, "I undertake to prove that the opinions advanced on both sides are equally erroneous. The committee who have reported, you yourselves, our adversaries, seek for forms to authorize the trial of the late King—I, on the contrary, affirm that the King is to be regarded more as an enemy whom we have to combat, than as a criminal whom we are to judge; the forms to be observed are not those of private prosecutions, but of public conflicts. Hesitation, delay, in such a case, are the greatest acts of imprudence. After postponing the formation of laws, no calamity could be so great as that of temporizing with a dethroned monarch. The mere act of having reigned is a crime, an usurpation which nothing can absolve, which a people are culpable for having suffered, and which invests every man with a personal right of vengeance. No one can reign innocently; the very idea of such a thing is ridiculous. We must treat such an usurpation as kings themselves have treated all attempts to dethrone them. Was not the memory of Cromwell arraigned for having overturned the authority of Charles? Yet, in truth, the one was not more an usurper than the

other; for when a people is sufficiently base to allow itself to be ruled by a tyrant, power belongs of right to the first person who can seize it, and is not more legitimate on one head than the other. The time will come when the world will be astonished that in the eighteenth century we should be so much behind the days of Cæsar: that tyrant was slain in a crowded senate, without any other formality than three-and-twenty strokes of a poniard, and on no other warrant than the liberty of Rome. And now you hesitate to engage in the trial of a man, the assassin of the people, caught in the very commission of his crimes. The men who are charged with the judgment of Louis have a Republic to form; those who scruple at inflicting a just punishment on a King, will never succeed in establishing one. If the Roman people, after six hundred years of hatred of tyrants —if England, after the death of Cromwell, saw the race of sovereigns revive in its bosom, what have all to fear among ourselves who see the axe tremble in the hands of those who have only just begun to wield it, and the People, in the first days of their liberty, awed by the recollection of their former fetters?" Robespierre strongly supported these arguments. "Consider," said he, "what audacity the enemies of liberty have already acquired. In August last the friends of liberty concealed themselves, now they boldly show themselves, and demand impunity for a perjured tyrant. We have heard of his virtues and benefactions. While we have had the utmost difficulty in rescuing the best citizens from a precipitate accusation, the cause of the despot alone is so sacred that it cannot be too fully or patiently discussed. If we are to believe his apologists, his trial will last several months; it will be protracted till next spring,

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when the despots will execute a general attack for his rescue. What a career is thus opened to the conspirators! what room afforded for the intrigues of the aristocracy! The Assembly," he added, "has been unconsciously led from the true question before them. There is in reality no criminal process; Louis is not an accused party; you are not judges; you are and can be only statesmen; you have not a verdict to pronounce for or against any individual, but a measure of public importance to adopt, an act essential to national existence to perform. A dethroned king in a Republic is fit for nothing but one of two objects; either to trouble the public tranquillity and endanger its freedom, or to confirm the one and the other. The punishment of death is in general an evil, for this plain reason, that, by the unchangeable laws of nature, it can only be justified by absolute necessity to individuals or the social body; and in ordinary cases it can never be necessary, because the government has ample means of preventing the guilty person from injuring his fellow-citizens. But a dethroned king, in the midst of an ill-cemented Republic,—a king whose name alone is sufficient to rekindle the flames of civil war, can never be an object of indifference to the public safety; and that cruel exception from ordinary rules is owing to nothing but the nature of his crimes. I pronounce with regret the fatal truth; but Louis must die, that France may live. Louis was once a king; he is now dethroned; the momentous question before you is decided by these simple considerations. Louis cannot be tried; his trial is over, his condemnation recorded, or the formation of the Republic is unjustifiable.[1] I demand that the Convention shall declare the King traitor towards France, criminal towards

[1] Mig. i. 232, 233. Th. iii. 300, 303. 321, 322.

human nature, and instantly condemn him in virtue of the right of insurrection."

By these extreme propositions, which they did not expect to carry, the Jacobins in a manner ensured the condemnation of Louis. When such doctrines were once abroad, the moderate party had no chance of success with the multitude, but in adopting measures of inferior severity. To have contended for an absolute exemption from punishment, would have appeared tantamount to abandoning the whole principles of the Revolution. Every man felt that he could not do so without endangering his own safety, and exposing himself to the imminent hazard of shortly changing places with his dethroned sovereign.[1]

Majority determine he may be tried.

[1] Mig. i. 233.

Actuated by these motives, the majority of the Assembly, composed of the Girondists and neutral party, decided that the King should be put on his trial before the Convention.[2]

Dec. 3, 1792.

[2] Mig. i. 233. Lac. ii. 30, 34.

Since his imprisonment in the Temple, the unfortunate monarch had been successively abridged in his comforts, and the severity of his detention increased. At first the Royal Family were permitted to spend their time together; and, disengaged from the cares of government, they experienced the sweetness of domestic affection and parental tenderness. Attended by their faithful servants, Clery and afterwards Huè, the King spent his time in teaching the Dauphin the elements of education, the Queen in discharging, with the Princesses, the most humble duties; or, like Mary in Lochleven castle, in large works of tapestry. The royal party breakfasted at nine in the apartment of the Queen; at one, if the day was fair, they walked for an hour in the garden, strictly watched by the officers of the Municipality, from whom they

Conduct of the Royal Family since their captivity.

CHAP. VI. 1792. often experienced the most cruel insults. Their son evinced the most engaging sweetness of disposition, as well as aptitude for study; bred up in the school of adversity, he promised to grace the throne with the virtues and energy of a humble station. The Princess Royal, in the intervals of instruction, played with her brother, and softened, by every possible attention, the severity of her parents' captivity; while the Princess Elizabeth bore the horrors of her prison with the same celestial equanimity with which she had formerly withstood the seductions of beauty, and the corruptions of a dissipated court.[1]

[1] Lac. x. 133, 135. Clery, 40, 43. Th. iii. 228, 280, 282.

The long evenings of winter were chiefly spent in reading aloud. Racine and Corneille, or historical compositions, were the favourite study of the Royal Family. The King perused, again and again, the history of the English Rebellion by Hume, and sought in the fate of Charles to prepare his mind for the catastrophe which he was well aware awaited himself. His firmness seemed to increase with the approach of danger; the irresolution and timidity by which he was formerly distinguished totally disappeared when his subjects' fate was not bound up with his own. The Queen herself took an example from his resolution. After dinner, the King and his family slept peaceably for a short time—a touching spectacle, standing as they did on the verge of eternity. At night the Dauphin said his prayers to his mother; he prayed for his parents' life, and for the Princess Lamballe, with whose death he was unacquainted, and his instructress, the Marquise de Tourzel. When the Commissioners of the Commune were near, he took the precaution, of his own accord, to utter the last supplications in an inaudible voice. The members of the Municipality, who alternately

visited the Royal Family during their captivity, at times displayed the most insolent barbarity, at others a delicate forbearance. Louis conversed with his inspectors on every occasion, and in the most familiar manner, on the subject of their different trades, and frequently surprised them by the extent and accuracy of his practical information. "Are you not afraid," said he to a mason, Mizareau, "that these pillars will give way?" "They are more solid than the throne of Kings," was the reply of the hard-hearted Republican.[1]

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[1] Clery, 52, 53, 58, 59. Th. iii. 282, 283. Lac. x. 138, 142. Th. iii. 281.

By degrees, however, the precautions of the Municipality became more vexatious. Their officers never, for an instant, lost sight of the Royal Family; and, when they retired to rest, a bed was placed at the door of each room, where the guards slept. Santerre, with his brutal staff, every day made them a visit; and a constant council of civic authorities was held in the lower apartments of the prison. Writing materials were first taken away: soon after, the knives, scissors, needles, and bodkins of the Princesses, were seized, after the most rigorous search: a cruel deprivation, as it not only prevented them from relieving the tedious hours by needle-work, but rendered it impossible for them any longer to mend their garments.[2]

[2] Th. iii. 284. Clery, 62, *et seq.*

Rigorously excluded from all communication with the city, it was with the utmost difficulty that they could receive any intelligence as to the events which were going on there. But the ingenuity of the faithful Clery discovered a method, to a certain degree, of satisfying their desires in this particular, by means of a public crier, with whom he opened a communication, and who placed himself under the windows of the King, and under pretence of selling

CHAP. VI. 1792. the journals, recounted their leading articles with as loud a voice as he could. Clery, at the appointed hour, placed himself at the window, and eagerly listened to the details, which, in the evening, after the King had retired to bed, he told him in a whisper, without the city-officers being aware of the communication.[1]

[1] Clery, 79. Th. iii. 285, 286.

They are separated from each other.

But, before long, the magistrates of Paris envied the royal captives the simple consolation which they derived from sharing their misfortunes together. By a resolution of the Municipality, therefore, it was determined that the King and the Dauphin should be separated from the Queen and the Princesses. This decree, as unnecessary as it was barbarous, rent the hearts of the whole family: their grief was so poignant, that it even melted the hearts of the commissioners of the magistracy, who left the room, that they might escape its influence. Shortly after their sorrow received some relief, by being permitted to dine together; their joy at meeting was so excessive that even their stern jailers were moved to tears.[2]

[2] Lac. x. 140, 142. Clery, 69.

Dec. 11, 1792.

On the day on which it had been determined that Louis should appear at the bar of the Convention, he was engaged teaching the Dauphin his lesson, when the commissioners entered, and informed the King that they were ordered to take the young Prince to his mother. He tenderly embraced his son, and was profoundly afflicted at the separation. At one, the Mayor of Paris, Chambon, entered, and read the decree, by which it was ordained, that Louis Capet should appear at the bar of the Assembly. "Capet is not my name," he replied, "but that of one of my ancestors. I could have wished, gentlemen, that you had left my son with me during the last two hours;[3] but that deprivation is a part of the treatment which

[3] Clery, 117, 120. Th. iii. 329. Lac. x. 174.

I have experienced ever since my confinement. I am ready to follow you, not because I recognise the authority of the Convention, but because they have the power to compel me."

When Madame Elizabeth was informed of the measures adopted in regard to the King, she expressed herself fully prepared for the catastrophe which followed. "The Queen and I," she said, "are prepared for the worst: we do not attempt to shut our eyes to his approaching fate: he will die the victim of his love for the people, for whose happiness he has never ceased to labour since his accession to the throne. How cruelly the country has been deceived! The religion of the King, his firm reliance on Providence, can support him in that cruel extremity. Clery, you will be left alone with my brother; redouble your attentions to him; we have now none to depend on but you."[1]

[1] Clery, 120.

The crowd was immense as the King passed through the streets: amidst a thousand revolutionary cries, some countenances indicated the most profound grief. His own appearance differed in no respect from what it had been when he passed, in the days of his prosperity, from one palace to another. Six hundred infantry, and a large body of cavalry, with three pieces of loaded cannon, preceded and followed the carriage.[2]

[2] Lac. x. 175. Th. iii. 329.

The King brought to the bar of the Assembly.

The Assembly, warned of the approach of the King, earnestly recommended tranquillity when he entered, "in order," said Barere, "that the guilty Sovereign may be awed by the stillness of the tomb. Remember the terrible silence which attended his appearance from Varennes,—silence prophetic of the judgment of kings by nations." Louis appeared: the President, Barere, immediately said, with a faltering

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voice :—"Louis, the French nation accuses you: you are about to hear the charges that are to be preferred: Louis, be seated." The King sat down with an intrepid air: no signs of emotion appeared in his countenance. The dignity and mildness of his presence was such, that the Girondists were melted to tears; and the fanaticism of St Just, Robespierre, and Marat, for a moment, yielded to the feelings of humanity.[1]

[1] Lac. x. 175, 176. Mig. i. 235. Th. iii. 331.

The charges consisted of an enumeration of the whole crimes of the Revolution, from its commencement in 1789, all of which were laid to his account. His answers, by the admission even of his enemies, were brief and firm: he displayed a remarkable degree of presence of mind, and, in most cases, was victorious over his adversaries, or touched them by the simplicity of his replies. The affair of Nancy, the journey to Varennes, the suppression of the revolt in the Champs de Mars, were justified by the decrees of the Assembly; the catastrophe of the 10th March, by the power of self-defence, conferred on him by the laws. To every question of the President, he replied with clearness and precision; denying some, showing that others were the work of his ministers, justifying all by the powers conferred on him by the Constitution. When charged with shedding the blood of the people on the 10th August, only, he exclaimed with a loud voice :—"No, sir, it was not I that did it." He was careful, in his answers, never to implicate any members of the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies: many who then sat as his judges, trembled, lest he should betray them.

[2] Lac. x. 177. Th. iii. 333.

The Jacobins beheld, with dismay, the profound impression made on the Convention, by the simple statement of truth; by the firm, but temperate de-

meanour of the Sovereign. The most violent of the party proposed that he should be hung that very night: a laugh of demons followed the proposal from the benches of the Mountain. But the majority, composed of the Girondists and the neutrals, decided that he should be formally tried, and defended by counsel.[1]

[1] Lac. x. 178. Mig. i. 235, 236.

When Louis returned to the Temple, the cruel resolution of the Commune was communicated to him, that he was no longer to be permitted to see his family. "My son, at least," he exclaimed, with the most heart-rending accent: "am I never again to see my son? what needless cruelty to deprive me of that sweet infant!" At half-past eight, the hour when the Dauphin usually went to bed, he earnestly entreated that he might see him for a moment, to give him his blessing; but even this favour was refused by the relentless Municipality. For some time after he was in the deepest distress; but he soon recovered his composure; read, for two hours, a work on religion, and never again lost his serenity of mind.[2]

His return to the Temple.

[2] Lac. x. 180. Clery, 124. Th. iii. 334.

The Convention, less barbarous than the magistrates, the day after, at the petition of the King, decreed that he might enjoy the society of his children, provided they did not return to the Queen during his trial. "You need not give yourself the trouble to pass such a decree," said the Jacobins, "for, unless the Municipality choose, they will not carry it into execution." The King, thinking the children more necessary to the Queen's comfort than his own, declined to take them from her, and submitted to the painful separation with a resignation which nothing could overcome.[3]

[3] Ibid, iii. 336.

On the following day, the deputies of the Convention announced to him, that he was to be permitted

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to choose his counsel. He chose M. Tronchet, and M. Target. The first accepted, and faithfully discharged his duty: the latter had the baseness to decline. Napoleon knew how to admire heroism, even when exerted in another's cause: one of his first acts was to promote Tronchet, then an old man, to the important duty of aiding in the formation of the legal code which has given such durable lustre to the name of its author, and he was soon after appointed to the head of the Supreme Court of Cassation.[1] The venerable Malesherbes, whose official career had been distinguished by so many sage and useful reforms, now came forward, and volunteered his services in behalf of his Sovereign. In a letter addressed to the President of the Convention, he said, "I have been twice honoured with a place in the councils of my master, when it was the object of ambition to all the world: I owe him the same service, when it imposes a duty which many consider dangerous." This generous offer drew tears from the eyes of many in the Convention: the Jacobins were silent: even reckless ambition, for a moment, felt the ascendant of heroic virtue.[2]

Generous devotion of Malesherbes and Tronchet.

[1] Bour. v. 122; & iv. 68.

[2] Mig. i. 237. Lac. x. 183, 188. Th. iii. 335.

Louis was deeply affected at this proof of devotion on the part of his aged friend. When he entered the Temple, he clasped him in his arms, and exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, "Ah! it is you, my friend? you see to what I am reduced by the excess of my affection for my people, and the self-denial which led me to remove the troops intended to protect the throne from the enterprises of the factious. You fear not to endanger your own life to save mine; but it is in vain: they will bring me to the scaffold, I am well aware; but that is of no moment: let us enter upon the defence, as if I were sure to be successful:[3]

[3] Huè, 42. Lac. x. 186, 193. Mig. i. 236. Th. iii. 336.

I will gain it in reality through your exertions, since my memory will descend unspotted to posterity." CHAP. VI. 1792.

Malesherbes and Tronchet afterwards called in the assistance of M. Deseze; a celebrated pleader, who at first had espoused the popular side, but had withdrawn from political life since the sombre days of the Revolution commenced. He entered with great earnestness, and his wonted ability, upon his arduous duties. "I have often wished," said the King to Malesherbes, "that I had the means of recompensing the zeal of your colleagues: I have thought of leaving them a legacy, but would it be respected by the Convention? Would it not endanger them?"— "Sire," replied Malesherbes, "the legacy is already bequeathed; in choosing them for your defenders, your Majesty has immortalized their names." His counsel were in continual astonishment at his serenity of mind. "Believe me," said he, "religion has more consolations than philosophy."[1]

[1] Lac. x. 195. Huè, 72. Th. iii. 348.

When the eloquent peroration of Deseze was read to the King the evening before it was to be delivered to the Assembly, he requested that it might be struck out. "I have to request of you," said he, "to make a sacrifice, which I know will be painful; strike out of your pleading the too touching peroration. It is enough for me to appear before such judges, and demonstrate my complete innocence; but I will not condescend to move their feelings." The same day, he composed his Immortal Testament; the most perfect commentary on the Principles of Christianity, that ever has come from the hand of kings. "I recommend to my son," said he, in that touching memorial, "if he ever has the misfortune to become king, to feel that his whole existence should be devoted to the good of his people, to bury in oblivion

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all hatred and resentment, especially for my misfortunes; to recollect that he cannot promote the happiness of his subjects, but in reigning according to the laws; but, at the same time, that a king cannot carry into execution his good intentions, without the requisite authority; that, otherwise, being continually thwarted in his operations, he is rather hurtful than beneficial. I pardon all those who have injured me in my misfortunes; and I pray my son to recollect only their sufferings. I declare before God, and on the eve of appearing at his tribunal, that I am totally innocent of the crimes laid to my charge." [1]

[1] Clery, 148. Lac. x. 197. Th. iii. 348.

On the 26th December, the King was conducted to the Assembly. He was taken in the carriage of the mayor, with the same military force as before. He evinced as great coolness as on the former occasion; spoke of Seneca, Livy, and the public hospitals; and addressed himself in a delicate vein of pleasantry to one of the Municipality, who sat in the carriage with his hat on. When waiting in the antechamber, malesherbes, in conversing with the King, made use of the words—"Sire, your Majesty." Treilhard, a furious Jacobin, interrupted him, exclaiming—"What has rendered you so bold, as to pronounce these words, which the Convention has proscribed?"—"Contempt of life," replied the intrepid old man.[2]

[2] Lac. x. 199. Th. iii. 349.

Splendid peroration of Deseze.

When they were admitted into the Assembly, Louis seated himself between his counsel; surveyed, with a benignant eye, the crowded benches of his adversaries, and was even observed sometimes to smile as he conversed with M. Malesherbes. In the speech which followed, M. Deseze ably argued the inviolability of the sovereign, and proved, that, if it was destroyed, the weaker party in the Convention had no security against the stronger; a prophetic

truth, which the Girondists soon experienced at the hands of their implacable enemies. He examined the whole life of the King, and showed that, in every instance, he had been actuated by the sincerest love of his people. On the 10th August, he observed :— "Was the Monarch under the necessity of submitting to an armed multitude? Was he constrained by law to yield to force? Was not the power which he held in the Constitution a deposit, for the preservation of which he was answerable to the nation? If you, yourselves, were surrounded by a furious and misguided rabble, which threatened, without respect for your sacred character, to tear you from this sanctuary, what could you do, other than what he has done? The magistrates themselves authorized all that he did, by having signed the order to repel force by force. Notwithstanding their sanction, the King was unwilling to make use of this authority, and retired into the bosom of the Convention, to avoid the shedding of blood. The combat which followed, neither was undertaken for him, nor by his orders; he interfered only to put a stop to it, as is proved by the fact, that it was in consequence of an order signed by him, that the Swiss abandoned the defence of the chateau, and surrendered their lives. There is a crying injustice, therefore, in reproaching him with the blood shed on the 10th August; in truth, his conduct, in that particular, is above reproach." His conclusion was in these words :—"Louis mounted the throne at the age of twenty; and, even then, he set the example of an irreproachable life: he was governed by no weak or corrupted passion: he was economical, just, and severe. He proved himself, from the beginning, the friend of his country. The people desired the removal of a destructive tax; he

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removed it: they wished the abolition of servitude; he abolished it in his domains: they prayed for a reform in the criminal law; he reformed it: they demanded, that thousands of Frenchmen, whom the rigour of our usages had excluded from political rights, should enjoy them; he conceded them: they longed for liberty; he gave it. He even anticipated their wishes; and yet it is the same people who now demand his punishment. I add no more: I pause before the tribunal of History: remember that it will judge your decision, and that its will be the voice of Ages." [1]

[1] Mig. i. 237. Lac. x. 208. Th. iii. 349, 352.

When the defence was concluded, the King rose, and spoke as follows:—"You have heard my defence; I will not recapitulate it: when addressing you, probably for the last time, I declare that my conscience has nothing to reproach itself with, and that my defenders have said nothing but the truth. I have no fears for the public examination of my conduct; but my heart bleeds at the accusation brought against me of having been the cause of the misfortunes of my people, and, most of all, of having shed their blood on the 10th of August. The multiplied proofs I have given in every period of my reign, of my love for my people, and the manner in which I have conducted myself towards them, might, I had hoped, have saved me from so cruel an imputation." Having said these words, he withdrew with his defenders. He embraced M. Deseze, and exclaimed in a transport of gratitude, "This is true eloquence; I am now at ease; I shall have an honoured memory; the French will regret my death." [2]

[2] Lac. x. 210. Th. iii. 353.

A stormy discussion immediately arose in the Assembly. Lanjuinais had the boldness to demand a revocation of the decree by which the King had

Debate on the Accusation.

been brought to the bar of the Convention. "If you insist on being judges," he concluded, "cease to be accusers. My blood boils at the thought of seeing in the judgment-seat men who openly conspired against the throne on the 10th of August, and who have in such ferocious terms anticipated the judgment without hearing the defence." The most violent agitation followed these words. "He accuses," exclaimed the Jacobins, "the 10th August in the midst of the Convention, which owes its existence to that revolt. He wishes to save the tyrant; to-morrow he will deliver us up to his vengeance. To the Abbaye with the perjured deputy! Let the friends of the tyrant perish with him." The Girondists felt the force of this reply. They did not venture to call in question an event which had established the Republic, and could not be arraigned without consigning their power to the dust, themselves to the scaffold. The storm was appeased by a proposal to discuss an appeal to the people; it took place, and lasted twenty days.[1]

[1] Lac. x. 213. Th. iii. 355.

St Just was the most powerful declaimer against the sovereign. "Posterity," he said, "will bless your work: Every generous heart throughout the world will respect your courage. What people has ever made such sacrifices for liberty? What people has been so often betrayed: what so slow in vengeance? Is it before the Prince that we must justify our proceedings, and is that Prince to be inviolable? The system of the King was apparent gentleness and goodness: Every where he identified himself with his country, and sought to fix on himself the affections which should be centred on her. He sapped the laws by the refinement of his conduct—by the interest which unfortunate virtue inspires,

CHAP. VI. 1792. Louis was truly a tyrant, and a perfidious and deceitful one. He convoked the States-General, but it was only to humble the noblesse, and reign absolute by their divisions. On the 14th July, and the 5th October, he had secretly provided the means of resistance; but when the national energy had shattered them in pieces, he made a virtue of necessity, and testified a hypocritical joy for the victory of the people. Since that time, being no longer able to employ force, he has never ceased to strive to corrupt the friends of the people; he employed the most perfidious dissimulation before the 10th August, and now assumes a feigned gentleness to disarm your resentment. The French long loved the King who was preparing their slavery; he has since slain those who held him foremost in their affections. The people will no more revolt if the King is just, than the sea will rise if it is not agitated by the winds." Robespierre exclaimed:—"There are sacred forms, unknown to the bar; there are indestructible principles, superior to the common maxims, consecrated by habit, or confirmed by prejudice. The true condemnation of a sovereign is to be found in the spontaneous insurrection of a people driven to desperation by his oppression; it is the most sure and the most equitable of all judgments. Louis was condemned long before the decree which called him to your bar. The last and greatest proof which freemen can give of their love to their country, is to sacrifice to it the first movements of returning sensibility. The humanity which trembles in presence of the accused, the clemency which compounds with tyranny, is the worst kind of oppression." [1]

[1] Lac. x. 215, 218. Th. iii. 356.

Vergniaud replied in a strain of empassioned eloquence. A profound silence prevailed when he arose;

the members listened with breathless anxiety to the first orator of France, pleading the cause of its first subject. "We are accused of provoking a civil war: The accusation is false. But what do they desire, who incessantly preach up assassination against the partisans of tyranny, and apply that name to all those who thwart their ambitious projects; who invoke poniards against the representatives of the people; who are never satisfied, unless the minority of the legislature rules the majority, and enforces its arguments by the aid of insurrections? They are the real promoters of civil war, who thunder forth on these principles in all the public places, and pervert the people, by stigmatizing justice with the name of pusillanimity, humanity with that of conspiracy. Who has not heard in the streets the exclamations of the rabble, who ascribe every calamity to the influence of the sovereign? If bread is dear, the cause is in the Temple; if money is scarce, if the armies are ill paid, the cause is in the Temple; if we are daily obliged to witness misery in the streets, the cause is in the Temple. Who will assure me that these men, who are so ready in exciting these complaints, will not hereafter direct them against the Convention? that those who assert that the tyranny of the Legislature has succeeded to that of the throne, and that a new 10th of August is necessary to extinguish it, that a defender is required for the Republic, and that one chief alone can save it—who will assure me that these same men will not exclaim, after the death of Louis, with still greater violence than before, if bread is dear, the cause is in the Convention; if money is scarce, if our armies are ill-provisioned, the cause is in the Convention; if the machine of government is overcharged, the cause is in the Convention;

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if the calamities of war have been increased by the accession of England and Spain to the league of our enemies, the cause is in the Convention, which provoked their hostility, by the condemnation of Louis? Who will assure me that among the assassins of September 2d, there will not be found what you now call *a defender*, but who, in reality, will prove a dictator, yet reeking with the blood of his victims; and, if so, to what unheard-of calamities will Paris be subjected? Who will inhabit a city tenanted only by desolation and death? And when the industrious citizens are reduced to beggary, who will then relieve their wants? who will succour their famishing children? I foresee the thrilling reply which will meet them:—'Go to the quarries, and snatch from the earth some bleeding remains of the victims we have murdered. You have asked for blood in the days of your power: here are blood and corpses; we have no other food now to offer you.' You shudder at the thought: oh! then unite your efforts with mine to avert so deplorable a catastrophe!"[1]

[1] Lac. x. 231. Th. iii. 369, 373. Mig. i. 238.

Louis condemned. Jan. 15, 1793.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Assembly unanimously pronounced, that Louis was guilty. The appeal to the people was rejected by a majority of 423 to 281.[2] *

[2] Lac. x. 232. Toul. iii. 187. Th. iii. 377.

This unanimous vote of the Convention, upon the guilt of Louis, is one of the most instructive facts in the history of the Revolution. That among 700 men, great difference of opinion must have existed on the subject, is quite certain, and is abundantly proved by the division which followed, and the narrow

* Eight members were absent from bad health; thirty-seven declared Louis guilty, but voted only for precautionary measures; 683 declared him guilty. Not one Frenchman deemed it safe to assert the truth, that the illustrious accused was entirely innocent.—See THIERS, iii. 377.

majority by which his death was ultimately voted. Yet, even the friends of Louis were compelled to commence their efforts for his salvation, by voting him guilty. The real grounds of his vindication, those on which the opinion of posterity will be founded, were, by common consent, abandoned. Upon a point on which history has unanimously decided one way, the Convention unanimously decided another.[1]

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[1] See Toul. iii. 226, 233. Mig. i. 237. Lac. x. 220-240.

This result could hardly have taken place in an ordinary court of justice, composed of a few individuals, whose situation was permanent, whose responsibility was fixed, whose duties were restricted to the considerations of evidence. It was the combination of political considerations which proved fatal to Louis: terror at a relapse into the ancient bondage to the throne; dread of the Revolutionary axe, already suspended over the country. Such is the general effect of blending the legislative and the judicial functions; of intrusting the life of a man to a popular Assembly, in which numbers diminish the sense of responsibility, without increasing the power of thought; and the contagion of a multitude adds to the force of passion, without diminishing the influence of fear.

Contrary to the opinion of almost all its members.

But this is not all. This extraordinary vote is a signal proof of the effects of democratic institutions, and of the utter impossibility of free discussion existing, or public justice being done, in a country in which the whole weight is thrown into the popular scale. It is well known, that, in America, the press, when united, is omnipotent,[2] and can, at any time, drive the most innocent man into exile; that the judgments of the courts of law are often notoriously unjust on any popular question, from the absence of

[2] Hall's America, ii. Chap. on the Judiciary.

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any counterpoise to the power of the people. The same truth was experienced, in the most cruel manner, on the trial of Louis. That his defenders in the Assembly were men of the greatest talents, is evident from their speeches; that they were possessed of the noblest courage, was afterwards proved by their deaths. Yet these intrepid men were obliged, for his sake, to commence the struggle by voting him guilty. To have done otherwise, would have been to have delivered him unsupported into the hands of his enemies; to have totally destroyed their influence with the people; to have ruined themselves, without saving him. So true is it, that the extreme of democracy is as fatal to freedom as unmitigated despotism; that truth is as seldom heard in the assemblies of the multitude, as in the halls of princes; and that without a due equipoise between the conflicting ranks of society, the balance may be cast as far the one way as the other, and the axe of the populace be as subversive of justice as the bowstring of the Sultan.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 237.

His death resolved on.

The question remained, what punishment should be inflicted on the accused? The vote lasted forty hours. During its continuance, Paris was in the last degree of agitation; the club of the Jacobins re-echoed with cries for his death; the avenues of the Convention were choked with a furious multitude, menacing alike his supporters and the neutral party. As its termination drew near, the tumult increased; the most breathless anxiety pervaded the Assembly, and at length, the President, Vergniaud, announced the result in these words:—"Citizens, I announce the result of the vote: when justice has spoken, humanity should resume its place: there are 721 votes; a majority of twenty-six have voted for death."[2] In the

[2] Mig. i. 238. 239. Th. iii. 380, 385. Lac. x. 233, 240.

name of the Convention, I declare that the punish- CHAP. VI.
ment of Louis Capet, is DEATH." 1793.

Without the defection of the Girondists, the King's life would have been saved. Forty-six of their party, including Vergniaud, voted conditionally, or unconditionally, for his death. They were anxious to save the King; but the democratic fury of the times rendered no mode practicable in their opinion, but the appeal to the people. Almost all of them subsequently perished on the scaffold they had prepared for their sovereign.[1] [1] Lac. x. 241.

Among those who voted for death, there were many, such as the Duke of Orleans, influenced by base or selfish motives.* In adopting this timid course, they erred as much in statesmanlike wisdom as moral virtue. Their conduct is thus stigmatized by the greatest master of political ability whom modern Europe has produced. "The Girondists and Jacobins," says Napoleon, "united in condemning the King to death: and yet the majority of the former had voted for the appeal to the people, which was intended to save him. This forms the inexplicable part of their conduct. Had they wished to preserve his life, they had the power to have done so: nothing more was necessary, but to have adjourned the sentence, or condemned him to exile or transportation: but to condemn him to death, and,

* The Duke of Orleans, when called on to give his vote, walked with a faltering step, and a face paler than death itself, to the appointed place, and there read these words. "Exclusively governed by my duty, and convinced that all those who have resisted the sovereignty of the people deserve death—my vote is for death." Important as the accession of the first Prince of the Blood was to the blood-thirsty faction, his conduct, in this instance, was too obviously selfish and atrocious not to excite a general feeling of indignation; the agitation of the Assembly became extreme; it seemed as if by this single vote the fate of the monarch was irrevocably sealed.—See *Hist. de la Convention*, ii. 48.

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at the same time, endeavour to make his fate depend on a popular vote, was the height of imprudence and absurdity: it was, after having destroyed the monarchy, to endeavour to tear France in pieces by a civil war. It was this false combination which ruined them. Vergniaud, their main pillar, was the very man who proclaimed as president the death of Louis: and he did this at the moment when the force of their party was such in the Assembly, that it required several months of labour, and more than one popular insurrection, to overturn it. That party would have ruled the Convention, destroyed the Mountain, and governed France, if they had at once pursued a manly, straightforward conduct. It was the refinements of metaphysicians which occasioned their fall."[1] But there were others, doubtless, of a different character; many great and good men, who mournfully inclined to the severer side, from an opinion of its absolute necessity to annihilate a dangerous enemy, and establish an unsettled Republic. Among these must be reckoned, Carnot, who, when called on for his opinion, gave it in these words: —"Death! and never did word weigh so heavily on my heart."[2]

[1] Nap. in Las Cases, ii. 184, 185, 190, 191.

[2] Carnot's Memoirs, 97. Lac. x. 288.

But the fate of Louis affords a signal proof, that what is unjust, never is expedient, and that its ultimate tendency is to injure the cause for which it was committed. The first effect may frequently answer the expectations of its perpetrators; the last invariably disappoints them. For a few years, the death of the King, by implicating so large a body of men in the support of the Republic, was favourable to democracy: it finally led to the restoration of the monarchy. With what eagerness do the Royalist historians now recount the scene in the Temple! what

would the Republican writers give to be able to expunge it from the French annals? It must always be remembered, that the actions of public men will be the subject of thought at a future period; when interest is stifled, and passion is silent; when fear has ceased to agitate, and discord is at rest; but when conscience has resumed its sway over the human heart. Nothing but what is just, therefore, can finally be expedient, because nothing else can secure the permanent concurrence of mankind. CHAP. VI. 1793.

When the counsel of the unfortunate Monarch were called in to hear the sentence, their tears for some time choked their utterance. Malesherbes strove in vain to speak; M. Deseze at length read a protest in which the King solemnly declared his innocence; and Tronchet earnestly entreated the revocation of a decree passed by so slender a majority. "The laws," it was said, "are passed by a simple majority."—"Yes," it was replied, "but the laws may be repealed; but who shall recall human life?" As a last resource, the Girondists proposed a delay for a limited time; but here too their fatal divisions gave the victory to their enemies, and sentence of death was pronounced.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 239. Lac. 243. Th. iii. 385.

This decisive step produced the utmost emotion in Paris. All the members of the Côté Droit, all the avowed or secret royalists, were in consternation; the Jacobins could hardly believe that so great a victory had been gained, as the condemnation of a king, in the midst of a people over whom, a few years before, he was an absolute monarch. They redoubled their activity; put all their forces on foot; kept up an incessant agitation; and earnestly besought all their adherents to be vigilant for the next two days, and secure the fruits of so great a triumph. This auda-

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city had the usual effect which force produces on the masses of men; it paralysed and put to silence the greater number, and excited the most profound indignation in a few resolute minds.[1]

[1] Th. iii. 389, 390.

Dignified conduct of Louis.

Louis was fully prepared for his fate. During the calling of the vote, he asked M. de Malesherbes, "Have you not met, near the Temple, the White Lady?"—"What do you mean?" replied he.—"Do you not know," resumed the King, with a smile, "that when a prince of our house is about to die, a female, dressed in white, is seen wandering round the palace? My friends," added he to his defenders, "I am about to depart before you for the land of the just; we shall there be reunited; and even this world will bless your virtues." His only apprehension was for his family: "I shudder to think in what a situation I leave my children; it is by prayer alone that I can prepare my mind for my last interview with them," was the only desponding expression which escaped him during this period of his captivity.[2]

[2] Lac. x. 244, 246. Clery, 158.

When M. de Malesherbes came to the prison to announce the result of the vote, he found Louis alone, with his forehead resting on his hands, and absorbed in a deep reverie. Without enquiring concerning his fate, or even looking at his friend, he said, "For two hours, I have been revolving in my memory, whether, during my whole reign, I have voluntarily given any cause of complaint to my subjects; with perfect sincerity I can declare, when about to appear before the throne of God, that I deserve no reproach at their hands, and that I have never formed a wish but for their happiness." The old man encouraged a hope that the sentence might be revoked;[3] he shook his head, and only entreated

[3] Mig. i. 240. Lac. x. 245, 247. Clery, 159.

his friend not to leave him in his last moments. But he was denied this consolation, by the cruelty of the Municipality; Malesherbes repeatedly applied at the gate, but never again obtained admittance. CHAP. VI. 1793.

The King then desired Clery to bring him the volume of Hume's history which contained the death of Charles I.; he read it sedulously for the few days which intervened before his execution. During the five preceding months, he had perused two hundred and fifty volumes.[1]

[1] Clery, 159. Th. iii. 283.

At length, on the 20th January, Santerre appeared, with a deputation from the Municipality, and read the sentence of death. The King received it with unshaken firmness, and demanded a respite of three days to prepare for Heaven; to be allowed an interview with his family, and to obtain the consolation of a confessor. The two last demands alone were conceded by the Convention, and the execution was fixed for the following morning, at ten o'clock. He then resumed his tranquil air, and dined as usual. The officers who guarded him had removed the knives. "Did they suppose me," said he, "base enough to kill myself? I am innocent, and can die without apprehension."[2]

[2] Lac. x. 246, 248. Mig. i. 240. Th. iii. 329.

The last interview with his family presented the most heartrending scene. "At half-past eight," says Clery, "the door of his apartment opened, and the Queen appeared, leading by the hand the Princess Royal, and the Princess Elizabeth; they all rushed into the arms of the King. A profound silence ensued for some minutes, broken only by the sobs of the afflicted family. The King sat down, the Queen on his left, the Princess Elizabeth on his right, Madame Elizabeth in front, and the young Dauphin between his knees. This terrible scene lasted nearly two

His last interview with his family.

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hours; the tears and lamentations of the royal family frequently interrupting the words of the King, sufficiently evinced that he himself communicated the intelligence of his condemnation. At length, at a quarter past ten, Louis rose; the royal parents gave each of them their blessing to the Dauphin; while the Princess still held the King embraced round the waist; as he approached the door, they uttered the most piercing shrieks; 'I assure you, I will see you again in the morning,' said he, 'at eight o'clock.'—'Why not at seven?' exclaimed they all at once. 'Well, then, at seven,' answered the King. 'Adieu, adieu;' he pronounced these words with so mournful an accent, that the lamentations redoubled; and the Princess Royal fainted at his feet. At length, wishing to put an end to so trying a scene, the King embraced them all in the tenderest manner, and tore himself from their arms." [1]

[1] Clery, 173. Th. iii. 394.

His last communion.

The remainder of the evening was spent with the confessor, the Abbé Edgeworth, who, with heroic devotion, discharged the perilous duty of attending the last moments of his Sovereign. At twelve he went to bed, and slept peaceably till five. He then gave his last instructions to Clery, and put into his hands the little property which he had at his disposal, a ring, a seal, and a lock of hair. "Give this ring to the Queen," said he, "and tell her with what regret I leave her; give her also the locket containing the hair of my children; give this seal to the Dauphin; and tell them all what I suffer at dying without receiving their last embraces; but I wish to spare them the pain of so cruel a separation." He asked for scissors to cut off his hair with his own hands, to avoid that humiliating operation from the hands of the executioners, but the officers refused his

request. He then received the sacrament from his confessor, at a little altar prepared by Clery, in his chamber, and heard the last service for the dying at the time when the rolling of the drums, and the agitation in the streets, announced the preparations for his execution.[1] CHAP. VI. 1793.

[1] Clery, 181, 182. Th. iii. 395, 397.

At nine o'clock, Santerre presented himself in the Temple. "You come to seek me," said the King; "allow me a minute." He went into his closet, and immediately came out with his Testament in his hand. "I pray you," said he, "to give this packet to the Queen, my wife."—"That is no concern of mine," replied the worthy representative of the Municipality; "I am here only to conduct you to the scaffold." The King then asked another member of the Commune to take charge of the document, and said to Santerre, "Let us set off." The Municipality next day published the Testament, "as a proof of the fanaticism and crimes of the King;" without intending it, they thereby raised the noblest monument to his memory.[2] His execution.

[2] Lac. x. 254. Mig. i. 240. Th. iii. 398. Clery, 183, 184. Edgeworth, 218.

In passing through the court of the Temple, Louis cast a last look to the Tower, which contained all that was dear to him in the world; and immediately summoning up his courage, seated himself calmly in the carriage, beside his confessor, with two gendarmes in the opposite side. During the passage to the place of execution, which occupied two hours, he never ceased reciting the Psalms which were pointed out by the venerable priest. Even the soldiers were astonished at his composure. The streets were filled with an immense crowd, who beheld in silent dismay the mournful procession; a large body of troops surrounded the carriage, a double file of soldiers and national guards, and a formidable

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array of cannon, rendered hopeless any attempt at rescue. When the procession arrived at the place of execution, between the Gardens of the Tuileries and the Champs Elysées, he descended from the carriage, and undressed himself, without the aid of the executioners, but testified a momentary look of indignation when they began to bind his hands. M. Edgeworth exclaimed, with almost inspired felicity, "Submit to that outrage as the last resemblance to the Saviour, who is about to recompense your sufferings." At these words he resigned himself, and walked to the foot of the scaffold. He there received the sublime benediction from his confessor, "Son of St Louis, ascend to Heaven!" No sooner had he mounted, than, advancing with a firm step to the front of the scaffold, with one look he imposed silence on twenty drummers, placed there to prevent his being heard, and said with a loud voice, "I die innocent of all the crimes laid to my charge; I pardon the authors of my death, and pray God that my blood may never fall upon France. And you, unhappy people"—— At these words Santerre ordered the drums to beat; the executioners seized the King, and the descending axe terminated his existence. One of the assistants seized the head, and waved it in the air; the blood fell on the confessor, who was still on his knees beside the lifeless body of his sovereign.[1]

[1] Edgeworth, 222, 225, 227. Th. iii. 399, 340. Lac. x. 255. Mig. i. 241.

The body of Louis was, immediately after the execution, removed into the ancient cemetery of the Madeleine, at the end of the Boulevard Italienne, where it was placed in a grave of six feet square, with its back against the wall of the Rue d'Anjou. Large quantities of quick lime were immediately thrown into the grave, which occasioned so rapid a decomposition, that when his remains

were sought after in 1815, with a view to their being conveyed to the Royal Mausoleum in St Denis, it was with great difficulty that any part could be recovered. Over the spot where he was interred, Napoleon commenced the splendid Temple of Glory, after the battle of Jena, professedly as a memorial of the grand army, but with the secret design of converting it into a monument to the victims of the Revolution, which he did not intend to reveal for many years, and till monarchical feelings were to a certain degree restored. In this as in so many other great designs, he was interrupted by the calamities which occasioned his fall, and the superb edifice was completed by the Bourbons, and now forms the church of the Madeleine, the most beautiful of the many beautiful structures in Paris. He suffered in the centre of the Place Louis XV., on the same ground where the Queen, the Princess Elizabeth, and so many other of the noble victims of the Revolution perished, where Robespierre and Danton were afterwards executed, and where the Emperor Alexander and the allied Sovereigns took their station when their victorious armies entered Paris on the 31st March, 1814. The greatest of revolutionary crimes, the greatest of revolutionary punishments, took place on the same spot: the history of modern Europe has not a scene fraught with equally interesting recollections to exhibit. It is now marked by the colossal obelisk of blood-red granite, which was brought from Thebes, in Upper Egypt, in 1833, by the French Government: the monument which witnessed the march of Cambyses, and survived the conquests of Cæsar and Alexander, is destined to mark, to the latest generation, the scene of the martyrdom of Louis, and of the final triumph of his immortal avenger.[1]

[1] Nap. in Las Cases, i. 370, 371. Hist. de la Conv. ii. 13, 14.

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Reflections on this event, and Louis's character.

The character of this monarch cannot be better given than in the words of the ablest of the republican writers of France. "Louis inherited a revolution from his ancestors; his qualities were better fitted than those of any of his predecessors to have prevented or terminated it; for he was capable of effecting reform before it broke out, and of discharging the duties of a constitutional throne under its influence. He was perhaps the only monarch who was subject to no passion, not even that of power, and who united the two qualities most essential to a good king, fear of God, and love of his people. He perished the victim of passions which he had had no share in exciting; of those of his supporters, to which he was a stranger; of the multitude, which he had done nothing to awaken. Few kings have left so venerated a memory. History will inscribe as his epitaph, that with a little more force of mind, he would have been an unique sovereign."[1]

[1] Mig. i. 241.

The great and touching qualities, however, exhibited by this unhappy monarch in his latter days; his unexampled sufferings and tragic fate, must not throw into oblivion the ruinous consequences of the indecision and weakness of his conduct on the throne; or make us forget that the calamities, the bloodshed, and irretrievable changes in society produced by the Revolution, sprung from his amiable but unhappy and unconquerable aversion to resolute measures. The man in existence who knew France and the Revolution best, has left a decided opinion on the subject. "Had Louis XVI," said Napoleon, "resisted manfully; had he evinced the courage, the activity, the resolution, of Charles I. of England, he would have triumphed."[2] The emigration of the nobility, indeed, deprived him of the principal

[2] Nap. in Las Cases, ii. 213.

stay of the throne; but it was the known irresolution of his character which was one main cause of that defection, by rendering the whole class of proprietors desperate, when such a chief was at the head of affairs; and the prolonged struggle in Lyons and La Vendée, proved what elements of resistance remained in the nation, even after they had withdrawn. CHAP. VI. 1793.

The reign of injustice is not eternal; no special interposition of Providence is required to arrest it; no avenging angel need descend to terminate its wrathful course; it destroys itself by its own violence: the avenging angel is found in the human heart. In vain the malice of his enemies subjected Louis to every indignity; in vain the executioners bound his arms, and the revolutionary drums stifled his voice; in vain the edge of the guillotine destroyed his body, and his remains were consigned to unhallowed ground; his spirit has triumphed over the wickedness of his oppressors. From his death has begun a reaction in favour of order and religion throughout the globe. His sufferings have done more for the cause of monarchy than all the vices of his predecessors had undone.

It is by the last emotions that the great impression on mankind is made. In this view it was eminently favourable to the interests of society that the crisis of the French monarchy arrived in the reign of Louis. It fell not during the days of its splendour, or its wickedness; under the haughtiness of Louis XIV. or the infamy of Du Barri; it perished in the person of a spotless monarch, who most of all his subjects, loved the people; whose life had literally been spent in doing good; whose failings, equally with his virtues, should have protected him from

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popular violence. Had he possessed more daring, he would have been less unfortunate; had he strenuously supported the cause of royalty, he would not have suffered from the fury of the populace; had he been more prodigal of the blood of others, he would in all probability have saved his own. But such warlike, or ambitious qualities, could not with certainty have been relied upon to arrest the Revolution: they would have postponed it to another reign, but it might, under the rule of an equally irresolute prince, have then come under darker auspices, when the cessation of tyranny had not extinguished the real cause of popular complaint, and the virtues of the monarch had not made unpardonable the fury of the people. The catastrophe occurred when all the generous feelings of our nature were awakened on the suffering side; to a sovereign who had done more for the cause of freedom than all the ancestors of his race; whose forbearance had been rewarded by encroachment; meekness by licentiousness; aversion to violence, by the thirst for human blood. A monarch of a more energetic character might have done more to postpone the Revolution; none could have done so much to prevent its recurrence.

Nor was the martyrdom of Louis lost to the immediate interests of the cause for which he suffered. His resignation in adversity, charity in suffering, heroism in death, will never be forgotten. The terrors of the republican reign, the glories of the imperial throne, have passed away; but the spotless termination of the monarchy has left an impression on mankind which will never be effaced. In the darkest night of the moral world, a flame has appeared in the tower of the Temple, at first feeble and struggling for existence, but which now burns with a

steady ray, and has thrown a sainted light over the fall of the French monarchy. The days indeed of superstition are past; multitudes of pilgrims will not throng to his tomb, and stone will not be worn by the knees of his worshippers: but the days of admiration for departed excellence will never be past; to his historic shrine will come the virtuous and the pious through every succeeding age; his fate will be commiserated, his memory revered, his murderers execrated, so long as justice or mercy shall prevail upon the earth. CHAP. VI. 1793.

CHAPTER VII.

STATE OF EUROPE PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE WAR.

ARGUMENT.

State of Europe at the commencement of the French Revolution—Great excitement universally prevalent from its success—Military and Naval Strength of Great Britain—Its Parties—Mr Pitt and Mr Fox—Mr Burke—Great division of opinion on the Revolution between these Leaders and the Whigs and Tories—State of Austria—Military Resources of the Imperial Dominions—Austrian Netherlands—Destruction of the Barrier Fortresses by the Emperor Joseph—Military State of Prussia—And Russia—Its Army—The Cossacks—Poland—Sweden—Ottoman Dominions—Italy and Piedmont—Spain and Portugal—Holland—Switzerland—France—State of Society in Europe at this Period—Difference between the Northern and Southern States, in point of Military Courage—Internal State of France when Hostilities commenced—Diplomatic Negotiations of the European Powers, previous to the commencement of the Contest—State and termination of the War in Turkey, and gradual extinction of all other Jealousies and Hostilities—Menacing Language of the French to other States—Treaty of Mantua—Declaration of Pilnitz—Not acted upon by the Allies—Revolutionary Party in France resolute on War—Declamations of the Girondists in favour of War—Mutual Recriminations, which lead to Hostilities—Strict Neutrality of Great Britain—Put an end to by the Revolution of 10th August—French System of Propagandism—Their Declaration of War against all nations who do not adopt their Principles of Government—Alarm excited in Great Britain by these Proceedings—Preparations for War in England—England declares War against France—General Reflections on these Events.

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"A REVOLUTION in France," says Napoleon, "is always, sooner or later, followed by a revolution in Europe." Placed in the centre of modern civilisation, this great country has, in every age, communicated the impulse of its own changes to the adjoining states. Its situation is too commanding to admit of its conquests being disregarded by the neighbouring kingdoms; its moral influence too extensive to

suffer them to escape the communication of its prevailing principles.

It was not to be expected that so great an event as the French Revolution, rousing as it did the passions of one, and exciting the apprehensions of another portion of mankind, all the world over, should long remain an object of passive observation to the adjoining states. It addressed itself to the hopes and prejudices of the great body of the people in every country, and, exciting their ill-smothered indignation against their superiors, superadded to the sense of real injuries the more powerful stimulus of revolutionary ambition. A ferment accordingly immediately began to spread through the neighbouring kingdoms; extravagant hopes were formed; chimerical anticipations indulged; and the labouring classes, inflated by the rapid elevation of their brethren in France, deemed the time approaching when the distinctions of society were to cease, and the miseries of poverty expire, amidst the universal dominion of the people.

Great excitement in Europe in consequence of the French Revolution.

A single successful revolution, the overthrow of one established government, will spread such principles; oceans of blood must be shed before they can be extinguished. In the pursuit of democratic ambition, men will submit to tyranny, far severer than monarchical authority can venture to impose; in the hope of elevating themselves on the ruins of their superiors, they are content to forego all the real blessings of their condition. Not all the sufferings of Napoleon's reign, not the French conscription, or the retreat from Moscow, have been able to extinguish this desire. More than one generation have perished in the struggle, but the ardent spirit is still the same, and springs up, like the phœnix, from the ashes of former existence.

CHAP. VII. 1792. The rise of this terrible spirit, destined to convulse the globe, excited the utmost alarm in all the European monarchies. From it sprung the bloody wars of the French Revolution, undertaken to crush the evil, but which at first tended only to extend it, by engrafting on the energy of democratic ambition the power of military conquest. With them began a new series of strifes; they terminated the contests of kings among each other, and commenced that of one social principle against another. Wars, thenceforward, became the result of conflicting opinions rather than contending interests, and the jealousies of sovereigns amongst each other were forgotten in the vehement animosities of their subjects. They assumed a less interested, but more terrible character; the passions which were roused brought whole nations into the field, and the strife which ensued involved every thing which was most dear to all classes of society.[1]

Mig. i. 129. Lac. Pr. Hist. i. 199.

Austria, Russia, and England, were at this period the great powers of Europe; they bore, accordingly, the principal part in the long and desperate struggle which ensued. Though little inclined for a contest, they were all in a situation capable of great exertions. Years of repose had fitted them to enter with unfettered resources upon a theatre where unprecedented sacrifices were to be required.

England.

Nine years of peace had enabled Great Britain to recover, in a great degree, the losses and exhaustion of the American war. If she had lost one empire in the Western, she had gained another in the Eastern world: The wealth of India began to pour into her bosom, and a little island in the west of Europe already exercised a sway over realms, more extensive than the arms of Rome had reduced to subjection. A vast revenue, amounting to L.7,000,000, was already

derived from her Indian possessions, and although nearly the whole of this great sum was absorbed in their costly establishment, yet her rulers already looked forward with confident hope to the period, now never likely to be realised, when the empire of Hindostan, instead of being as heretofore a burden, should be a source of revenue to the ruling state, and the wealth of India really become that mine of gold to Britain, which it had long proved to numbers of her children.[1] Her national debt, amounting to L.244,000,000, and occasioning an annual charge of L.9,317,000, was indeed a severe burden upon the industry of the people; and the taxes, though light in comparison of what have been imposed in later times, were still felt as oppressive; but, nevertheless, the resources of the state had augmented to an extraordinary degree during the repose which had prevailed since the conclusion of the former contest. Commerce, agriculture, and manufactures, had rapidly increased; the trade with the independent states of North America had been found to exceed what had been enjoyed with them when in a state of colonial dependence; and the incessant exertions of every individual to better his condition, had produced a surprising effect upon the accumulation of capital and the state of public credit. The three per cents, from 57, at the close of the war, had risen to 99; and the overflowing wealth of the capital was already finding its way into the most circuitous foreign trades, and hazardous distant investments. The national revenue amounted to L.16,000,000, and the army included 32,000 soldiers in the British isles, besides an equal force in the East and West Indies, and thirty-six regiments of yeomanry; but these forces were rapidly augmented after the commencement of the

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[1] Ann. Reg. xxxiii. 153.

State of Great Britain.

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war, and, before 1796, the regular army of Britain amounted to 206,000 men, including 42,000 militia. More than half of this force, however, was required for the service of the colonies; and experience has proved, that Britain can never collect above 40,000 men upon any one point on the continent of Europe. The real strength of England consisted in her inexhaustible wealth, in the public spirit and energy of her people, in the moral influence of centuries of glory, and in a fleet of 141 ships of the line, which gave her the undisputed command of the seas.[1]

[1] Jom. i. 250. Ann. Reg. xxxiii. 124. Report of Finance Committee, May 10, 1791. State Papers. Jamess, i. Table i. App. Pebrer's Tables, 247.

But though abounding in all the resources, England at this period had little of the moral strength, so necessary in war. During the disastrous contest in America, the national glory had been seriously tarnished. Two large armies had laid down their arms to the enemy, and even the ancient supremacy of the seas seemed to have been put in hazard, when the combined fleets of France and Spain rode triumphant in the British Channel. The glorious defence of Gibraltar alone had maintained the ancient celebrity of the English arms; nor was either the army or the navy in such a state as to render any early success probable. Abuses of the most flagrant description existed in every department of the land forces: Young men were appointed to commissions by purchase, or in consequence of Parliamentary influence, without any knowledge of their profession; promotion was seldom awarded to real merit; and no academies or schools were in existence to teach the inexperienced officer even the rudiments of the military art. It was by slow degrees, and in the school of adversity, that the British army was improved, and her commanders rendered capable of turning to good account that undaunted courage,[2]

[2] Jom. i. 251.

which in every age has formed the honourable cha- CHAP. VII
racteristic of the British people. 1792.

England, like the other monarchies of Europe, had slumbered on, contented, prosperous, and for the most part inglorious, during the eighteenth century. The bright aurora with which it was ushered in in the days of Eugene and Marlborough, had afforded no true promise of the general character of the political era which followed them: the fierce passions, the heart-stirring feelings, the enduring energy of the civil wars, had passed into the page of history, and, with the licentious profligacy of Charles II., were pictured only in contemporary annals, or the reflecting mirror of the national theatre. The arms of Frederic, and the administration of Chatham, alone cast a fleeting lustre over the general monotony of the period; but even their glories were the result of the ambition of kings or the rivalry of cabinets, and partook not of the profound interest of the theological contests which had preceded, or the political passions which followed them. The strife of religion had ceased, that of equality had not commenced; between the two there intervened a long repose of an hundred years, illustrated by few glories, stained by still fewer crimes, during which the fervour springing from the former great convulsion insensibly expired, and the seeds destined to produce a still fiercer collision, were gradually ripening to maturity.

It was a generally received opinion among the philosophers and statesmen of this period, that society had at length assumed a settled and permanent form, that all the great causes of discord had been extinguished, and that history would never again have to commemorate the vehement contentions and tragic

CHAP. VII. 1792. incidents which had arisen in an earlier period of human existence. Adam Smith observed, that while the population of America was doubling every five-and-twenty years, that of Europe was slumbering on with an increase which would hardly arrive at the same result in five hundred; while Gibbon lamented that the period of interesting incident was passed, and that the modern historian would never again have to record the moving events and dismal catastrophes of ancient story. Such were the anticipations of the greatest men of the age, on the verge of a period destined to be illustrated by the blood of Robespierre, the constancy of Pitt, and the triumphs of Nelson; when the human race, mowed down by the merciless sword of Napoleon, was to spring up again with an elasticity almost equalling the far-famed rapidity of Transatlantic increase.*

The opinions of the country, as might have been expected on so great an event, were divided on the French Revolution. The young, the ardent, the philosophical, were sanguine in their expectations of its success; a new era seemed to have dawned upon the world; from the rise of freedom in that great empire, the fetters of slavery, and the bonds of superstition, appeared to be dropping from the hands of the human race. It was not merely the factious, the restless, and the ambitious, who entertained these opinions; they were shared by many of the best and wisest of men; and in England, it might with truth be said, what an eloquent historian has observed of Europe in general,[1] that the friends of the French Revolution comprised at that period the most en-

[1] Bot. i. 70.

* The population of Prussia is now doubling in 26; that of Britain in 42; that of Austria in 69; that of France in 105 years; that of Russia in 66 years.—DUPIN, *Force Com. de France*, i. 36.

lightened and generous of the community. It was not *then* that its tendency was, or could be, generally perceived. * CHAP. VII. 1792.

But if the changes in France were regarded with favour by one, they were looked on with utter horror by another class of the community. The great majority of the aristocratic body, all the adherents of the church, all the holders of office under the monarchy, in general the great bulk of the opulent ranks of society, beheld them with apprehension or aversion. Many of those who had life before them, rejoiced in the changes which society seemed about to undergo; those who had passed through it, trembled at their approach; those who had nothing to lose, had no fears of the consequences of innovation: those who had acquired, or inherited much, were justly apprehensive that they would be the first objects of spoliation. These were the general divisions of society; but of course they were modified by the temper or habits of thought in different individuals, and the partisans of innovation numbered many of the most ancient and illustrious noble families among their supporters.

At the head of the first party was Mr Fox, the eloquent and illustrious champion of freedom in every part of the world. Descended of a noble family, he inherited the love of liberty which had long been hereditary in his race, and by the impetuous torrent of his eloquence long maintained his place as leader of the Opposition of the British empire. His talents for debate were of the very highest order; and in Mr Fox and Mr Pitt.

* The decided democrats in Great Britain at that period were by no means numerous. They were estimated by Mr Burke, who was noways inclined to diminish the dangers of the time, at 80,000.—BURKE, viii. 140, 141.

CHAP. VII. 1792. the impassioned energy with which he delivered his opinions, never was exceeded by any orator in the English Parliament. Though he was too indolent to have acquired extensive erudition, and was often indebted, like Mirabeau, for the facts connected with the subjects of discussion rather to the industry of others than his own research, yet no one could make a more skilful use of the information with which he was furnished, or gathered in the course of debate; or descant with more originality on a subject apparently exhausted by the efforts of others. Profuse, dissipated, and irregular in private life, he had none of the weight, ever so powerful in England, which arises from the purity of personal character; but amidst all his frailties, the warmth of his heart and generosity of his disposition secured the ardent attachment of a numerous body of private friends, embracing a large proportion of the ablest men and oldest families in the state; while his vehement and impassioned oratory readily commanded the admiration of that numerous class who longed after more popular government, or the general license of a revolution. But his intellect was not equal to his eloquence; his judgment was inferior to his debating power: sincere in his attachment to freedom, he advocated, during the best part of his life, a political system, which was entailing upon the country where it arose the most degrading bondage; passionately devoted to the cause of liberty, he continued constant in his admiration for those frantic innovations which, more than the coalition of kings, against which the thunders of his eloquence were directed, rendered impossible its duration in the first of European monarchies.

Mr Pitt was the leader of the second party, which at the commencement of the French Revolution was in the full possession of Government, and supported

by a decided majority in both Houses of Parliament. Modern history has hardly so great a character to exhibit. Inheriting from his father, the first Lord Chatham, a patriotic and truly British spirit, he early imbibed at the same time a strong attachment to those liberal principles on which the Administration of that illustrious man was founded, and which had given to his Government such general and deserved popularity. His early career was chiefly distinguished by these sentiments, and his great abilities from the very first gave him a distinguished place in Parliament; but circumstances soon arose which called forth the latent powers of his mind, and exhibited in full lustre the indomitable firmness of his character. Mr Fox and Lord North had formed a coalition, after their chief cause of discord had been extinguished by the termination of the American war, and strong in the possession of an apparently invincible majority in the Lower House, had ventured upon the bold measure of bringing in a bill which took from the East India Company the government of India, and vested it in certain commissioners, to be appointed, not by the crown, but by the House of Commons. It is impossible to doubt that such a change, if carried into execution, would have subverted the constitution, by the establishment of an *imperium in imperio*, possessed of greater authority and influence than the executive. But this catastrophe was averted by the firmness and sagacity of the Monarch who then held the British sceptre. Perceiving at once the full extent of the danger, well aware, in the emphatic words of Lord Thurlow, "that this bill, if carried, would take the crown from the King's head, and place it on that of Mr Fox,"[1] he instantly resolved to interpose his influence to prevent it from passing into a law, and, if necessary,

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[1] Parl. Hist. xxiv. 125.

CHAP. VII. 1792. retire to Hanover, rather than continue in Britain, the mere instrument of a parliamentary oligarchy. By his exertions the bill, after having passed the Commons by a great majority, was thrown out, by a slender majority, in the House of Lords; and this led to the immediate resignation of the Coalition Ministry. The King instantly sent for Mr Pitt, and on the 12th January, 1784, he took his seat in the House of Commons as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

8th Dec. 1783.

Never did a more arduous struggle await a minister. The Opposition, led by the impetuous energy of Fox, aided by the experienced influence and admirable temper of Lord North, were possessed of a great majority in the Lower House, and treated at first with the utmost scorn, this attempt on the part of a young man of six-and-twenty to dispossess them of the government. But it was soon evident that his talents were equal to the task, how arduous and apparently hopeless soever. Invincible in resolution, and yet cool in danger; possessed of a moral courage, which nothing could overcome, fertile in resources, powerful in debate, eloquent in declamation, he exhibited a combination of great qualities, which for political contests never was excelled. A pure and irreproachabe private character, gave his opponents no weak side wherein to assail the panoply with which he was surrounded: a temperament, the energies of which were wholly concentrated on national objects, left him no room for selfish passion or private gratification. Incorruptible, though wielding the wealth of England and the Indies; fearless, though combating alone the whole weight of an apparently irresistible Opposition; cool, though tried by all the means which could overcome the firmest patience; cautious, when prudence counselled reserve; energetic and eloquent, when the moment for action

had arrived; he successfully withstood the most formi- CHAP. VII.
dable parliamentary majority which had appeared 1792.
in English history since the Revolution, and ultimately remained victorious in the struggle. An Administration thus tried in its infancy, was proof against any other danger in its maturer years: the intellect of its head clearly and at once perceived both the peril of the French revolutionary principles, and the expedience of making no attempt by external means to check its progress; and fortunately for the cause of freedom throughout the world, that great convulsion found the British Government in the hands of one, alike friendly to the cause of freedom, and hostile to the excesses which so often lead to its destruction. An attentive observer of the progress of the Revolution, therefore, he cautiously abstained from any act which might involve England in any hostility with its distracted neighbour; and though strongly pressed in the outset to take a part in the struggle, maintained a strict neutrality, when the German armies had penetrated to the very heart of France, and the moment seemed arrived when it was possible to terminate, by a single hostile demonstration, the rivalry of four centuries.

Mr Burke was the leader of a third party, com- Mr Burke.
posed of the old Whigs, who supported the principles of the English, but opposed those of the French Revolution. This celebrated man had long combated in the ranks of Opposition with Mr Fox, and the warmest private friendship had cemented their political alliance; but on the breaking out of the French Revolution they embraced different views.[1] Mr Fox warmly applauded its principles, and declared in the House of Commons, that "the new constitution of France was the most stupendous and glorious edifice of liberty which had been erected on the foundation

[1] Ann. Reg. xxxiii. 114.

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of human integrity in any age or country." Mr Burke, on the other hand, gifted with greater political sagacity and foresight, early exerted his talents to oppose the levelling principles which that convulsion had introduced; and his work on the French Revolution produced perhaps a greater impression on the public mind than any which has yet appeared in the world. It abounds in eloquent passages, profound wisdom, and discriminating talent; but vast as its influence, and unbounded as its reputation were when it first appeared, its value was not fully understood till the progress of events had demonstrated the justice of its principles. The division on this vital question for ever alienated these illustrious men from each other, and drew tears from both in the House of Commons; an emblem of the effects of this heart-stirring event upon the charities of private life, of the variance which it introduced into the bosom of domestic families, and between friendships which "had stood the strain of a whole lifetime." [1]

[1] Ann. Reg. xxxiii. 136.

State of Austria.

Unwearied in perseverance, firm in purpose, unchangeable in ambition, the Austrian Government was the most formidable rival with whom the French republic had to anticipate a contest on the continent of Europe. This great empire, containing at that time nearly 25,000,000 of inhabitants, with a revenue of 90,000,000 florins, numbered the richest and most fertile districts of Europe among its provinces. The manufacturing wealth of Flanders, the agricultural riches of Lombardy, added not less to the pecuniary resources, than the energetic valour of the Hungarians, and the impetuous zeal of the Tyrolese, to the military strength of the empire. The possession of the Low Countries gave them an advanced post, formerly strongly fortified, immediately in contact with the French frontier; while

the mountains of the Tyrol formed a vast fortress, garrisoned by an attached and warlike people, and placed at a salient angle between Germany and Italy, the certain theatre of future combats. Her armies, numerous and highly disciplined, had acquired immortal renown in the wars of Maria Theresa, and maintained a creditable place under Daun and Laudohn, in the scientific campaigns with the great Frederick. Her government, nominally a monarchy, but really an oligarchy, in the hands of the great nobles, possessed all that firmness and tenacity of purpose, by which aristocratic powers have always been distinguished; and which, under unparalleled difficulties and disasters, has brought them at last successfully through the long struggle in which they were shortly after engaged.[1]

[1] Hard. i. 39.

Maria Theresa was the soul of the Austrian monarchy; it was her heroic spirit, sage administration, and popular character, which brought its fortunes safe through the terrible crisis that occurred in the middle of the eighteenth century, and laid the foundation of its present grandeur and prosperity. At the accession of her son Joseph II. in 1780, new maxims of government succeeded: the ancient spirit of the monarchy seemed about to expire. His mind was cultivated, his views benevolent, his habits simple: but these amiable qualities were combined with others of a more dangerous nature. An ardent reformer, a philanthropic philosopher, he was impatient to change every thing in the civil, religious, and military administration of his vast states; and in the warmth of his benevolence, urged on many reforms neither called for nor desired by his subjects. Endowed with an ardent and innovating temperament, he, at the same time, was animated by a desire for

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territorial acquisition and military glory. Strongly impressed with the inconvenience and expense attending the possession of the Low Countries, so much exposed to France, so far removed from the hereditary states, and relying on the support of Catharine, Empress of Russia, in whose ambitious designs on Turkey he was participant, he was extremely desirous of incorporating Bavaria with his vast possessions, by giving the elector the Low Countries in exchange, with the title of King. Frederick of Prussia instantly sounded the alarm on this dangerous proposal, and, by his influence, a treaty was concluded at Berlin between Prussia, Saxony, and Hanover, which was the last act of that great man, and for the time caused this ambitious project, on the part of Austria, to miscarry. But the Imperial Cabinet never lost sight of the design, and their attempts to carry it into execution during the course of the revolutionary war, became, as will appear in the sequel, the source of numberless calamities to themselves and to Europe.[1]

March 17, 1786.

[1] Hard. i. 32, 36.

The Austrian forces, at the commencement of the war, amounted to 240,000 infantry, 35,000 cavalry, and 10,000 artillery; but the extent and warlike spirit of their dominions furnished inexhaustible resources for the maintenance of the contest. Sincere and honest in principle, attached to old institutions, and powerfully swayed by religion, the inhabitants of her varied dominions were, with the exception of some of the Italian provinces, unanimous in their horror of the French republican principles; while the power and firm ascendant of the nobility gave steadiness and consistence to their efforts to oppose it. The cavalry was in the finest order, and performed splendid services during the course of the war; but the

infantry, though well adapted for plain fighting in a good position, was incapable of the energetic movements which the new system of military operations required, and was disgraced by the frequent occurrence of large bodies laying down their arms. The provinces of Croatia, Transylvania, and the Bannat, lying on the frontier of Turkey, were organized in a military manner; all the inhabitants were trained to the use of arms, from whence the government derived inexhaustible supplies of irregular troops. Hungary and the Low Countries formed the *élite* of the infantry, and composed the principal part of the Imperial Guard. The cavalry, admirably mounted, were skilled in all the movements of war, and the artillery respectable, and in good equipment; but the officers of the infantry were deficient in military information, and the soldiers, though well disciplined, wanted the fire and vivacity of the French troops.[1]

[1] Hard. i. 33, 34. Jom. i. 235, 236.

The Flemish dominions of Austria had recently been the theatre of a revolt so different from that of France, that it is difficult to conceive how they could both have arisen in countries so near each other in the same age of the world. The Emperor Joseph II. had alienated the affections of these provinces, by the proposal to exchange them for Bavaria, a project which was only prevented from taking effect by the armed intervention of Prussia; and next excited their alarms by a variety of reforms, founded on philosophical principles, but totally unsuited to the character and degree of information possessed by the people. At length the proposal to give a colony of Genevese and Swiss, established near Ostend, the free exercise of their religion, brought matters to a crisis; the universities protested against the innova-

Austrian Netherlands.

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tion, and he replied by abolishing the seignorial jurisdictions, and authorizing the sale of a great proportion of the estates of the monasteries, establishing schools independent of the clergy, and curtailing the privileges of the Estates, by introducing intendants, who almost superseded their authority. These changes excited an universal spirit of disaffection in the provinces, and led to a measure the most extraordinary, and the most fatal, which modern history has to record.[1]

[1] Hard. i. 89, 90. Lac. viii. 157, 159. Scott's Napoleon, i. 12, 13.

Destruction of the barrier fortresses.

The barrier towns of the Netherlands, extorted from France after so much bloodshed, or erected at so vast an expense, were demolished, and the level country left open and unprotected, to invite the invasion of their enterprising neighbours. It seemed as if the Emperor imagined that the marriage of his sister Marie Antoinette, had made the union between the two kingdoms perpetual; and his whole danger arose from the discontented disposition of his own subjects. "Europe," says Jomini, "beheld with astonishment those celebrated fortresses, so famous in former wars, demolished by the very power which had constructed them; and the Flemings, proud of the recollections with which they were associated, sighed as they saw the plough razing the vestiges of so much historical glory. The event soon proved the fatal tendency of the measure. The Low Countries, bereft of their fortresses, destitute of mountains, and too distant from the centre of the empire to be effectually defended, fell a prey to the first attack; and the Austrian Government were first apprised of the ruinous tendency of their measures, by the loss of that ancient province of their empire."[2]

[2] Jom. i. 159.

The discontents and ingratitude of the Flemings preyed so severely on the susceptible heart of Joseph

II. that they shortened his life. Upon his death, which happened on 16th February, 1790, he was succeeded by his brother Leopold, whose paternal and benevolent system of government in Tuscany had long been the object of admiration to all the philosophers of Europe; but whose character, admirably adapted for the pacific administration of that tranquil duchy, was hardly calculated for the government of the great and varied provinces of the Austrian empire. He found the monarchy shaken in all its parts by the reforms and innovations of his predecessor; the Belgian provinces in a state of open insurrection; Bohemia and Lower Austria in sullen discontent; and Hungary in a state of menacing insubordination. To complete his difficulties, the seeds of a revolution were rapidly expanding in Poland, while its distracted habits and feeble government afforded little hope that it would be permitted to extricate itself from its embarrassments without foreign invasion; and it was easy to foresee that the spoliation of its rich and defenceless plains, would throw the apple of discord among the ambitious military monarchies by which it was surrounded.[1]

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[1] Hard. i. 79, 80.

The discontent of the Flemings soon broke out into open insurrection. In the autumn of 1789, at the very time that the French were revolting against the privileged classes and the authority of the church, the inhabitants of the Netherlands took up arms to support them. France sought to impose liberal measures upon its Government; Flanders to resist those introduced by its sovereign; Brussels, Ghent, and Mons, speedily fell into the hands of the insurgents, and the rapidity of the disaster accelerated the death of the Emperor Joseph. But this suc-

Revolt of the Flemings against Austria. Sept. 1789.

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cess was of short duration. Leopold, his successor, took the most energetic measures to re-establish his authority; the partisans of the aristocracy in the revolted provinces came to blows with the adherents of the democracy; the French, indignant at the rejection of their principles by the aristocratic insurgents, refused their support; the march of Marshal Bender, at the head of the Imperialists, was a continual triumph; and the Austrian forces resumed possession of the whole of their Flemish dominions, with as much facility as they had lost them.[1]

[1] Hard. i. 88, 90. Lac. viii. 164. Scott, i. 15, 20.

The House of Hapsburg was still in possession of the imperial dignity; but the high sounding titles and acknowledged supremacy of the Cæsars, could not conceal the real weakness of their authority. The vast but unwieldy fabric of the empire was governed by the diet assembled at Ratisbon, and consisted of three colleges; that of the electors; that of the princes; and that of the free towns. The first, which had been fixed by the treaty of Westphalia at eight electors, to which Hanover was afterwards added, possessed the sole right of electing the emperor; the second, composed of thirty-three ecclesiastical and sixty-one lay princes, enjoyed little influence, and afforded only an inviting prospect to the rapacity of their superiors; the third, consisting of forty-seven towns, was consulted only for form's sake, and had no real deliberative voice in public affairs. Each circle was bound to furnish a certain contingent of troops for the defence of the empire; but their soldiers, disunited and various, formed but a feeble protection, and the real strength of the empire consisted in the Austrian and Prussian monarchies.[2]

[2] Hard. i. 8, 9.

The military strength of Prussia, raised to the highest pitch of which its resources would admit by

the genius and successes of the Great Frederick, had rendered this inconsiderable kingdom a first-rate power on the continent of Europe. Its army, 160,000 strong, comprising 35,000 horse, was in the highest state of discipline and equipment; but this force, how considerable soever, formed but a small part of the strength of the kingdom. By an admirable system of organization, the whole youth of the state was compelled to serve a limited number of years in the army in their early life, the effect of which was, not only that a taste for military habits was universally diffused, but that the state always possessed within its bosom an inexhaustible reserve of experienced veterans, who might, in any emergency, be called to its defence. The aversion evinced in so many other countries to the military service, from the unlimited length to which it extended, was unknown where it reached only to four years, and it came rather to be regarded as an agreeable mode of spending the active and enterprising period of youth. Prussia reaped the full benefit of this judicious system, when she withstood the three greatest powers in Europe during the Seven Years' War; and she was indebted to the same cause for those inexhaustible and courageous defenders who flocked to her standard during the latter part of the revolutionary contest.[1]

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Military state of Prussia.

[1] Jom. i. 231, 232. Hard. i. 37.

At the death of the Great Frederick, the Prussian army was considered as the first in Europe. Proud of a struggle without a parallel in modern times, and of the unrivalled talent of their commander, the Prussian soldiers possessed not only the moral strength so necessary in war, but had been trained, in a variety of exercises, to the rapid movement of great masses. Annual evolutions, on a large scale, accustomed the army to that necessary piece of

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instruction; and under the scientific auspices of Seidlitz, the cavalry had become the most perfect in Europe. In great schools at Berlin, and other places, the young officers were taught the military art; and there, as elsewhere in the northern monarchies of Europe, the whole youth of any consideration were destined for the profession of arms. The higher situations in the army, however, were reserved for the nobles; but, by degrees, that invidious restriction was abandoned, and in the arduous struggle of 1813, Prussia had reason to felicitate herself upon the change.[1]

[1] Jom. i. 228, 231.

The states which composed the Prussian monarchy were by no means so coherent or rounded as those which formed the Austrian dominions. Nature had traced out no limits like the Rhine, the Alps, or the Pyrenees, to form the boundary of its dominions; no great rivers or mountain chains protected its frontiers; few fortified towns guarded it from the incursions of the vast military monarchies with which it was surrounded. Its surface consisted of 14,000 square leagues, and its population, which had been nearly doubled under the reign of Frederick the Great, amounted to nearly 8,000,000 souls, but they were composed of various races, spoke different languages, and professed different religions, and were protected by no external or internal line of fortresses. Towards Russia and Austrian Poland, a frontier of two hundred leagues was totally destitute of places of defence: Silesia alone enjoyed the double advantage of three lines of fortresses, and the choicest gifts of nature. The national defence rested entirely on the army and the courage of the inhabitants: but animated by the recollection of the Seven Years' War, they were both elevated to the highest pitch.[2]

[2] Hard. i. 37, 39.

The government was a military despotism: no privileges of individuals or corporations restrained the authority of the sovereign; the liberty of the press was unknown: but nevertheless the public administration was tempered by the wisdom and beneficence of its state policy. This system, begun by Frederick the Great, had passed into settled maxims, which governed the administration of his successors. In no country of Europe, not even in England or Switzerland, was private right more thoroughly respected, or justice more rigidly observed, both in the courts of law and the domestic measures of government. "Every thing for the people, nothing by them," was the principle of its administration. Toleration, established even to excess, had degenerated into its faal ally, indifference and infidelity, in many of the higher orders: manners, imitating the seductions of Paris, were corrupt in the capital; while the middling ranks, united in secret societies of Freemasonry, already indulged those ardent feelings which afterwards exercised so important an influence on the destinies of Europe.[1]

[1] Hard. i. 40, 44.

Russia.

The might of Russia, first experienced by Frederick at the terrible battle of Cunnersdorff, was now beginning to fill the north with apprehension. This immense empire, comprehending nearly half of Europe and Asia within its dominions, backed by inaccessible frozen regions, secured from invasion by the extent of its surface and the severity of its climate, inhabited by a patient and indomitable race, ever ready to exchange the luxuries and adventure of the south for the hardships and monotony of the north, was daily becoming more formidable to the liberties of Europe. The Empress Catherine, endowed with masculine energy and ambition, was urging a bloody

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war with Turkey, in which the zeal of a religious crusade was directed by the sagacity of civilized warfare. The campaign had commenced with the taking of Oczakoff, which easily yielded to the audacity and fortune of Prince Potemkin; but the courage of the Turks, though long dormant, was at length roused to the highest pitch. Undisciplined and unstable in the field, they were almost invincible behind walls, and the most inconsiderable forts, manned by such defenders, became impregnable save at an enormous expense of blood and treasure. But a new and terrible enemy to the Ottomans arose in SUWARROW, one of those extraordinary men, who sometimes, by the force of their individual character, alter the destiny of nations. This determined and dauntless general, who possessed a religious influence over the minds of his soldiers, joined the Austrians with 8000 men, as they were maintaining a doubtful contest with 50,000 troops on the banks of the river Rymniski, and infused such energy into the combined army, that they gained a complete victory over a superior body of Turks. He was afterwards employed in the siege of Ismael, and, chiefly by his fanatical ascendency over the minds of his soldiers, succeeded in carrying by assault that celebrated fortress, though defended by 24,000 of the bravest troops in the Turkish dominions. British diplomacy was employed before it was too late to avert the threatened calamities of the Ottoman empire; new objects of contention arose; fresh contests sprung out of the Western Revolution, and the glory of placing the cross on the dome of St Sophia was reserved for a future age.[1]

[1] Lac. viii. 155, 156. Ann. Reg. xxxiii. 201. Tooke's Russia, i. 128. Ségur, ii. 279.

The Russian army.

The Russian infantry had long been celebrated for its immovable firmness. At Pultowa, Cunnersdorff, Choczim, and Ismael, it had become distinguished;

and the cavalry, though greatly inferior to its present state of discipline and equipment, was inured to service in the war with the Turks, and mounted on a hardy and admirable race of horses. The artillery, now so splendid, was then remarkable only for the cumbrous quality of the carriages, and the obstinate valour of the men. The armies were recruited by a certain proportion of conscripts drawn out of every one hundred male inhabitants; a mode of conscription which, in an immense and rapidly increasing population, furnished an inexhaustible supply of soldiers. They amounted, in 1792, to 200,000 men, but the half of this force alone was disposable for active operations, the remainder being cantoned on the Pruth, the Caucasus, and the frontiers of Finland. In this enumeration, however, was not comprised either the youth of the military colonies, who afterwards became of great importance, or the well-known Cossacks of the Don. This irregular force, composed of the pastoral tribes in the southern provinces of the empire, costs almost nothing to the state; the government merely issues an order for a certain number of this hardy band to take the field, and crowds of active young men appear, equipped at their own expense, mounted on small but indefatigable horses, and ready to undergo all the hardships of war, from their duty to their sovereign, and their hopes of plunder or adventure. Gifted with all the individual intelligence which belongs to the pastoral and savage character, and yet subjected to a certain degree of military discipline, they make the best of all light troops, and are more formidable to a retreating army than the *élite* of the French or Russian Guards.[1]

The Cossacks.

[1] Jom. i. 254, 258.

Inured to hardships from his infancy, the Russian

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soldier is better calculated to bear the fatigues of war than any in Europe. He knows no duty so sacred as obedience to his officers; submissive to his discipline as to the ordinances of religion, no fatigue, no privation, makes him forget its obligations. Through every march, through entire campaigns, you behold the cannoneer near his piece, at the post assigned to him by his commander; and unless authorized to do so, nothing will induce him to abandon it. The waggon-train wax their harness in bivouacs, under a cold of 15 deg. of Reaumur, as they would do for a day of parade in the finest weather. This admirable spirit of precision renders their defeats extremely rare; and the soldiers are so accustomed, in their wars with the Turks, to look for safety only in closing their ranks, and to expect destruction if they fly, that they are hardly ever broken. If they have not the facility at rallying after a defeat, which their high degree of individual intelligence has given to the French soldiers, they have greater firmness in resisting it.[1]

[1] Jom. i. 256.

The whole energies of the nation are turned towards the army. Commerce, the law, and all civil employments, are held in no esteem; all the youth of any consideration betake themselves to the profession of arms. Immense military schools, in different parts of the empire, annually send forth the whole flower of the population to this dazzling career. Precedence depends entirely on military rank; and the heirs to the greatest families are compelled to enter the army in the lowest grade. They face hardship and danger with the same courage as the private soldiers; they were to be found by their sides in the breach of Ismael and in the snows of Finland. Promotion is open equally to all: a government depending entirely on its military prowess,

finds itself obliged to promote real merit; and the greater part of the officers at the head of the army have risen from the inferior stations of society.[1] CHAP. VII. 1792.

[1] Jom. i. 257.

But formidable as the power of Russia appeared even at that period, the world was far from anticipating the splendid part which it was destined to bear in the approaching conflict. Her immense population, amounting in Europe alone to nearly 35,000,000,[2] afforded an inexhaustible supply of men. The ravages of war, or pestilence, were speedily filled up in a country whose numbers were doubling every forty years. Her soldiers, inured to heat and cold from their infancy, and actuated by a blind devotion to the Czar, united the steady valour of the English to the impetuous energy of the French troops. Dreaded by all her neighbours, and too remote to fear attack, she could afford to send forth her whole disposable force on foreign service; while the want of pecuniary resources was of little importance, as long as the wealth of England could be relied on to furnish the sinews of war. Before the conclusion of hostilities, France saw 150,000 Russian soldiers reviewed on the plains of Burgundy; a force greater than that with which Attila combated on the field of Chalons.

[2] Tooke's Russia, ii. 138.

Poland, the destined theatre of glorious achievements, was, at the commencement of the French Revolution, groaning under the weight of foreign oppression. This heroic country, long the bulwark of Christendom against the Turks, the deliverer of Germany, under John Sobieski, the ancient conqueror of Russia, had been the victim of an atrocious conspiracy in 1772. The flatness of its surface, the want of fortified towns, and the weakness incident to an elective monarchy and turbulent

Poland.

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democracy, had rendered all the valour of the people unavailing, and the greater part of its dominions had been reft by its ambitious neighbours at that disastrous epoch. In 1792, the neighbouring sovereigns found a new pretence for renewing their spoliations. Stanislaus Augustus, the last nominal sovereign, had granted a constitution to his subjects, better adapted than could have been hoped for to their peculiar situation. By it, the crown was declared elective, but the dynasty hereditary—the Princess of Saxony was proclaimed heiress of the throne after the demise of the King. Legislative measures and decrees were to be proposed by the crown, and sanctioned by the Chambers of Lords and Commons. The nobles abandoned their privilege of engrossing every employment under government; and to provide for the gradual elevation of the people, the King was obliged, during the sitting of each diet, to ennoble thirty of the bourgeois class. The Catholic religion was declared the established faith. This constitution was proclaimed amidst the universal acclamations of the people; and new life thought to have been infused into the ancient monarchy, from the intermixture of popular vigour. But these transports were of short duration. Stanislaus Augustus, how enlightened soever in framing a constitution, was ill qualified to defend it. The jealousy of the Empress Catherine was awakened by the prospect of Poland again emerging into political vigour, and her fears by the proximity of revolutionary principles to her hereditary states. A new treaty of partition was signed between the three adjoining powers, and the conqueror of Ismael called from the Turkish war, to give the last blow to the ancient defenders of the Christian faith.[1]

[1] Ann. Reg. xxxiii. 205. Lac. viii. 168, 172, Burke, vi. 178.

Though deprived of the weight arising from unity of empire, the native valour of the Poles destined them to perform an important part on the theatre of Europe. Napoleon has characterised them as the people who most rapidly become soldiers; and their ardent patriotism rendered them the ready victims of any power which held out the prospect of restoring their national independence. The valour of the Polish legions made them distinguished in the wars of Italy and Spain: they followed the French standards to Smolensko and Moscow, and maintained an unshaken fidelity to them during all the disasters of the subsequent retreat. Though cruelly abandoned by Napoleon in the commencement of the Russian campaign, they adhered to his fortunes through all the subsequent changes; and amidst the general defection of Europe, kept their faith inviolate on the field of Leipsic.

Sweden.

Sweden was too remote from the scene of European conflict to have much weight in the political scale. Secure in a distant, and almost inaccessible situation—blessed with a hardy, virtuous and enlightened peasantry, she had nothing to dread but from the insatiable progress of Russian ambition. She had recently, however, concluded a glorious war with her powerful neighbour; her arms, in alliance with those of Turkey, had taken the imperial forces by surprise; and Gustavus, extricating himself by a desperate exertion of valour from a perilous situation, had destroyed the Russian fleet, and gained a great victory so near St Petersburg, that the sound of the cannon was heard in the palace of the Empress; but such is the weight of Russia, that her enemies are always glad to purchase peace, even in the moments of their greatest success. Catherine hastened to get

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quit of the Swedish war, by offering advantageous terms to her courageous rival, and flattered his chivalrous feelings into accepting them, by representing that the efforts of all sovereigns should now be directed towards resisting the progress of the French Revolution, and that he alone was worthy to head the enterprise.[1]

[1] Lac. viii. 167.

Ottoman dominions.

Placed on the other extremity of the Russian dominions, the forces of Turkey were still less capable of affecting the balance of the European states. Formidable during the period of its vigour and rise, the Ottoman power, like that of all barbarous nations, had rapidly and irrecoverably declined, after the zenith of its greatness had been attained. It was defended chiefly by the desert and inaccessible nature of its territory, the consequence of the incessant and grievous oppression of its government, and the jealousies of the European powers, who never failed to interfere when the danger became imminent to the existence of its dominion. Its cavalry, brave, skilful, and admirably mounted, was the most formidable in the world;[2] but the desultory temper of its people was incapable of the submission and constancy requisite to form an experienced and disciplined body of infantry. Sometimes, however, the spirit of fanaticism roused them to extraordinary exertions, and on such occasions it was not unusual to see 150,000 armed men on the banks of the Danube; but these efforts were of short duration, and the first serious reverse dissipated the mighty host, and reduced its leaders to the command of a few regiments of horse. But though these causes rendered the Ottomans incapable of foreign conquest, they were still extremely formidable to an invading army; their desert and waterless plains afforded no resources to an enemy, while

[2] Nap. i. 375.

the total want of roads fit for the transport of wheeled carriages, made it almost impossible to bring supplies from the adjoining states, or advance the artillery requisite for the siege of their fortresses. Behind the walls of the most inconsiderable towns, the Janizaries fought with desperate, and often successful valour; the whole inhabitants took to arms in defence of their lives and their religion; and, lined with such defenders, trifling cities frequently presented a more formidable resistance than the most regular fortifications of Western Europe.

The incessant and grinding oppression, however, of the Ottoman government, had implanted a principle of weakness in the Turkish power little attended to in former times, but of which the effects have since been strikingly displayed. This consisted in the constant and rapid decay of the population, which soon rendered her unequal even to those sudden and vehement exertions, which at former periods had struck such terror into the neighbouring states.[1] At the same time the ignorant and brutal pride of the government, which prevented them from acquiring any knowledge of the situation of the European powers, rendered them incapable of availing themselves of the advantages which their desperate struggles frequently afforded, and on more than one occasion made them throw away the only remaining chance of recovering their lost ground from the unceasing hostility of Russia.

[1] Walsh's Constantinople, i. 193, 194. Buckingham's Mesopotamia, i. 212.

From a different cause the political importance of Italy had sunk as low as that of the Turkish states. Inhabiting the finest country in Europe, blessed with the richest plains and the most fruitful mountains, defended from invasion by the encircling sea and the frozen Alps, venerable from the recollections of

Italy.

CHAP. VII. 1792. ancient greatness, and containing the cradle of modern freedom, the people of Italy were yet as dust in the scale of nations. The loss of military courage and of private virtue seems to have been the cause of this sad degradation. When conducted by foreign leaders, the inhabitants of its northern states, like the Portuguese and the Hindoos under British direction, have risen to honourable distinction beneath the standard of Napoleon; but led by their own officers, and following their national colours, they have never been able to stand the shock of the Transalpine forces. Tuscany, from the effects of the sage and paternal government of Leopold, was flourishing, prosperous, and contented; but the proximity of France had spread the seeds of discontent in Piedmont, and, in common with its inhabitants, the Milanese beheld with undisguised satisfaction the triumph of the republican arms on the other side of the Alps. It was in vain, however, that a smothered feeling of indignation at foreign rule pervaded the Italian states; in vain all their theatres rung with acclamations at the line of Alfieri:

"Servi siam si! ma servi ognor frementi."

They were incapable of those steady and sustained efforts, which are essential to the establishment either of civil liberty or national independence; hence, during all the contests of which it was the theatre, Italy became the unresisting prey of the northern victor. The Austrian and French eagles alternately ruled her plains, but the national colours were never unfurled, nor any effort made to liberate them from foreign dominion; and on the few occasions on which the Neapolitans and Venetians attempted to raise the standard of independence, they were vanquished by the mere sight of the enemy's force. It

is melancholy to reflect, that the descendants of the Romans, the Samnites, and the Cisalpine Gauls, should so far, and to appearance so irrecoverably, have degenerated from the virtue of their ancestors; but it seems to be the law of nature, that a high state of civilisation cannot *long* co-exist with military courage in the favoured climates of the world; and that, as some counterpoise to the lavish accumulation of her gifts, Nature has denied to their inhabitants the permanent resolution to defend them.[1]

[1] Bot. i. 21. Lac. viii. 147.

Piedmont.

The kingdom of Piedmont, situated on the frontier of Italy, partook more of the character of its northern than its southern neighbours. Its soldiers, chiefly drawn from the mountains of Savoy, Liguria, or the maritime Alps, were brave, docile, and enterprising, and, under Victor Amadeus, had risen to the highest distinction in the commencement of the eighteenth century. The regular army amounted to 30,000 infantry and 3500 cavalry; but, besides this, the Government could summon to their support 15,000 militia, who, in defending their mountain passes, rivalled the best troops in Europe. They were chiefly employed during the war in guarding the fortresses, and the number of these, joined to the natural strength of the country, and its important situation as holding the keys of the great passes over the Alps, gave this state a degree of military importance beyond what could have been anticipated from its physical strength.[2]

[2] Jom. i. 244.

Holland.

Sunk in obscure marshes, crushed by the naval supremacy of England, and cooped up in a corner of Europe, the political importance of the Dutch Republic had fallen in a great degree in the scale of Europe. Its army was still composed of 44,000

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men, and its fortified towns and inundations gave it the same means of defence which had formerly been so gloriously exerted; but the resolution of the inhabitants was by no means at that time equal to the strength of their situation. A long tract of peace had weakened the military spirit of the people, and their chief defence was placed in the wretched assistance of auxiliary troops, which never enabled the Republic, during the subsequent contests, to bring 30,000 men into the field. The world at this period was far from anticipating the glorious stand which the Dutch subsequently made against the hostility by land and sea of the two greatest powers in Europe.[1]

[1] Jom. i. 246.

Spain.

Animated by stronger passions, descended from more fiery progenitors, and inured to a more varied climate, the people of the Spanish Peninsula were calculated to perform a more distinguished part in the strife for European freedom. This singular and mixed race, united to the tenacity of purpose which distinguished the Gothic, the fiery enterprise which characterised the Moorish blood; centuries of almost unbroken repose had neither extinguished the one nor abated the other; and the Conqueror of Europe erroneously judged the temper of her people, when he measured it by the inglorious reigns of the Bourbon dynasty. The nobles, degenerated by long-continued intermarriage with each other, were indeed incapable of strenuous exertion, and the reigning family had none of the qualities calculated to command success; but the peasantry, bold, prosperous, and independent, presented the materials for a resolute army; and the priesthood, possessed of an unlimited sway over the minds of the lower orders, were animated by the most inextinguishable hatred

at the principles of the French Revolution. The decay of its national strength, falsely ascribed by superficial writers to the drain of colonial enterprise, and the possession of the mines of America, was really owing to the accumulation of estates in the hands of communities and noble families, and the predominant influence of the Catholic priesthood, which for centuries had rendered that fine kingdom little else than a cluster of convents, surrounded by a hardy peasantry. But though these causes had rendered Spain incapable of any sustained foreign enterprise, they had not in the least diminished its aptitude for internal defence; and the people, who in every age have there made common cause with the King and the nobles, flew to arms with unequalled enthusiasm, when their loyalty was awakened by the captivity of their sovereign, and their fanaticism roused by the efforts of their pastors. By a just retribution, the first great reverse of the French arms was occasioned by the spirit of religious resistance nourished by their first flagrant acts of injustice; and the disaster of Baylen would not have arisen, nor the bones of 500,000 French whitened the plains of Spain, but for the confiscation of the property of the French church by the Constituent Assembly.[1]

[1] Foy, ii. 143, 144, 151, 160, 170. Jovell. 171. Napier, i. 4, 5.

The nominal military strength of Spain, at the commencement of the Revolution, was 140,000 men; but this force was far from being effective, and in the first campaigns they were never able to raise their force in the field to 80,000 combatants, though they reinforced their army by thirty-six battalions on the breaking out of the war; but on occasion of the invasion in 1808, an immense insurrectionary force sprung up in every part of the country. These

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undisciplined levies, however, though occasionally brave, like the Turks, in defending walls, were miserably deficient in the essential qualities of regular soldiers; they had neither the steadiness, mutual confidence, nor conduct, necessary for success in the field. Accordingly, they were almost invariably routed in every encounter; and but for the tenacity of purpose arising from their character, ignorance and habit of boasting, which effectually concealed the extent of their disasters from all but the sufferers under them, and the continued presence of a large English force in the field, the war would have been terminated soon after its commencement, with very little trouble to the French Emperor.[1]

[1] Napier, i. 237, *et seq.* Jom. i. 240.

The Spanish soldiers have never exhibited in the wars of the Revolution that firmness in the field, which formerly distinguished their infantry at Pavia, Rocroi, and in the Low Countries. They have been distinguished rather by the tumultuary habits and tendency to abandon their colours on the first reverse, which belongs to the troops of tropical climates, and characterised their forefathers in the Roman wars. It would seem as if the long residence of their ancestors in a warm climate had melted away the indomitable valour of the Gothic race in their original frozen seats. Military glory was held in little esteem; hardly four of the grandees were to be found, in 1792, in the army or naval service. But the peasantry have evinced throughout the war the most obstinate and enduring spirit: Though routed on numberless occasions, they almost always rallied, as in the days of Sertorius, in more favourable circumstances; and though deserted by nearly all the nobility, maintained a prolonged contest with the Conqueror of northern Europe.[2]

[2] Jom. i. 242, 243.

Cradled in snowy mountains, tilling a sterile soil, and habituated to severe habits, the Swiss peasantry exhibited the same features which have always rendered them so celebrated in European wars. Their lives were as simple, their courage as undaunted, their patriotism as warm, as those of their ancestors who died on the field of Morat or Morgarten. Formidable in defence, however, their numerical strength, which did not exceed 38,000 regular soldiers,[1] rendered them of little avail in the great contests which rolled round the feet of their mountains. Occasions, indeed, were not awanting, when they displayed the ancient virtue of their race: Their conflicts in Berne and Underwalden, at the time of the French invasion, equalled the far-famed celebrity of their wars of independence; and, amidst the disgraceful defection of the 10th August, the Swiss guards alone remained faithful to the fortunes of Louis, and merited, by their death, the touching inscription on the graves at Thermopylæ:

Switzerland.

[1] Statistique de la Suisse, 102.

> "Go, stranger! and at Lacedæmon tell,
> That here, obedient to her laws, we fell."

The forces of France, destined to contend with and long triumph over this immense aggregate of military strength, were far from being considerable at the commencement of the struggle. The infantry consisted of 160,000 men, the cavalry of 35,000, the artillery of 10,000; but a great proportion of these forces had left their colours during the agitated state of the country, prior to the breaking out of the war. During the stormy period of the Revolution, the discipline of the troops had sensibly declined, and the custom of judging for themselves on political questions, had introduced a degree of license inconsistent with the habits of military discipline;[2] but

Forces of France.

[2] Jom. i. 224. Carnot's Memoirs, 136. St Cyr, Introd. i. 36.

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all these defects were more than counterbalanced by the number of able men who speedily entered the ranks from the Tiers Etat, and, by their vigour and audacity, first supplied the want of military experience, and soon after induced it.

The cavalry, consisting of fifty-nine regiments, brave, enthusiastic, and impetuous, were at first deficient in steadiness and organization, but these defects were speedily supplied under the pressure of necessity, and by the talent which emerged from the lower classes of society. The artillery and engineers, which were not exclusively confined under the old *régime* to men of family, from the first were superior in intelligence and capacity to any in Europe, and contributed more than any other arm to the early successes of the Republican forces. The staff was miserably deficient; but the materials of the finest *état-major* existed in France, and the ascendant of genius, in a career open to all, soon brought an unparalleled accession of talent to that important department. But the chief strength of the army consisted in 200 battalions of volunteers, raised by a decree of the Constituent Assembly; and who, although not fully completed, and imperfectly instructed in military exercises, were animated with the highest spirit, and in the greatest state both of mental and physical activity. In both these respects they were greatly superior to the old regiments, which were not only paralysed by the divisions and insubordination consequent on the Revolution, but weakened by the habits of idleness and vice which they had contracted during a long residence in barracks.[1]

[1] Jom. i. 226. St Cyr, i. 38. Hard. i.

It is a mistake, however, to imagine that the military force of France at this period was inconsiderable, or that the independence of France was pre-

served, on the invasion in 1792, merely by the revolutionary levies. Napoleon's authority is decisive to the contrary. "It was neither," says he, "the volunteers nor the recruits who saved the Republic: it was the 180,000 old troops of the monarchy and the discharged veterans whom the Revolution impelled to the frontiers. Part of the recruits deserted, part died, a small portion only remained, who in process of time formed good soldiers. You will not soon find one going to war with an army of recruits."[1] CHAP. VII. 1792. [1] Thib. Cons. 109.

Such was the state of the principal European powers at the commencement of the French Revolution. A spirit of gentleness pervaded the political world, the effect of increasing knowledge, and long-continued prosperity. Even the most despotic empires were ruled with a lenity unknown in former times, and the state-prisons of all the European monarchies would probably have exhibited as few inmates as the Bastile when it was stormed in 1789. Ever since the termination of the general war in 1763, a growing spirit of improvement had pervaded the European states, and repeatedly called forth the praises of the contemporary annalists. Agriculture had risen into universal esteem; kings were setting the example of cultivating the soil; and a large portion of the nobility were every where lending their aid to improve that first and best of human pursuits. Leopold in Tuscany and Flanders, and Louis in France, were ardently engaged in the amelioration of their dominions; even in the regions of the North, the spirit of improvement was steadily advancing. The able exertions of Frederick had nearly doubled in a single reign the resources of his dominions; and in Poland State of society over Europe at this epoch.

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and Russia, the example of a gradual enfranchisement of the serfs had been set with the happiest success. The haughtiness and pride of aristocratic birth was gradually yielding to the influence of extending wants and an enlarged commerce, and in many of the European states the highest offices under government were held by persons of plebeian birth. Neckar, Vergennes, and Sartines, who successively held the most important situations in France, were of this class. The Inquisition had been voluntarily abandoned in Parma, Placentia, Milan, and Modena, and toleration over all Europe had spread to a degree unknown in former times. All the remaining vestiges of that fierce spirit, which sullied with barbarism the lofty and romantic courtesy of ancient manners, were gradually softening away; and the flames of that religious zeal, which for two centuries had so often kindled the torch of civil discord, were sunk into ashes. Every succeeding generation was of a character milder and gentler than the last. There was a diffusion of liberality that was beginning to pervade the mass of mankind. The diversified classes of society harmonized with each other in a way hitherto unknown; and whatever might be the peculiarities of particular constitutions, a sweeter blood seemed in all to circulate through every member of the political body. The lowest of the people, under governments the most despotic, no longer held their countenances prone to the earth, but were taught to erect them, with a becoming sense of their own nature; and the brow of authority, instead of an austere frown, wore a more inviting air of complacency and amenity.[1]

[1] Lac. viii. 140. Bot. i. 13, 19. Ann. Reg. xxxiii. 207, 211; xxiv. 12, 13; xxvii. 3, 4; xxviii. 169.

But while such was the general character of Europe, there was an essential distinction between the

national tendency of its Northern and Southern states, which soon produced the most important effects on their respective fortunes: The spirit of the South was essentially pacific, that of the North ambitious; the repose of the former bordered on inertness, the energy of the latter on turbulence. The amelioration of the first was slow and almost imperceptible, flowing chiefly from the benignity of the sovereigns; the improvements of the latter rapid and violent, taking their origin in the increasing importance of the people. Pleasure was the leading object in the South, Glory, military glory, in the North. The difference was perceptible even during the progress of pacific changes; but when war broke out, its effects became of the last importance, and speedily led to the subjugation of the Southern by the Northern states of Europe.[1]

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Difference between the South and the North.

[1] Lac. viii. 141.

The greatest blessings border upon misfortunes; out of the bosom of calamity often springs the chief improvement of the human race. To the eye of philosophy it was not difficult to discern that the growing passion for innovation, to which all reform is more or less related, was pregnant with political danger; and that the disposition to improve, emanating from the purest intention in the higher ranks, was likely to agitate the spirit of democracy in the lower. Such a peril, accordingly, was foreseen and expressed by the contemporary historians;[2] but they did not foresee, nor could human imagination have anticipated, either the terrible effects of that spirit upon the passing generation, or the beneficial effects which the storm of the world was destined to have upon the future condition of mankind.

[2] Ann. Reg. xxviii. 29, 30.

The state of France, at the period when hostilities first commenced, cannot be better described than in

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State of France when hostilities commenced.

the words of the eloquent and philanthropic Abbé Raynal, in a letter to the National Assembly: "Placed on the verge of the grave, on the point of quitting an immense family, of which I have never ceased to wish the happiness, what do I behold around me in this capital? Religious troubles, civil dissension, the consternation of some, the audacity of others, a government the slave of popular tyranny, the sanctuary of the laws violated by lawless men; soldiers without discipline, chiefs without authority, ministers without resources; a king, the first and best friend of his people, deprived of all power, outraged, menaced, a prisoner in his own palace, and the sovereign power transferred to popular clubs, where ignorant and brutal men take upon themselves to decide every political question. Such is the real state of France; few but myself would have the courage to declare it, but I do so, because I feel it to be my duty; because I am bordering on my eightieth year; because no one can accuse me of being a partisan of the ancient *régime;* because, while I groan over the desolation of the French church, no one can assert that I am a fanatical priest; because, while I regard as the sole means of salvation the re-establishment of the legitimate authority, no one can suppose that I am insensible to the blessings of real freedom."[1] When such was the language of the first supporters of the Revolution, it is noways surprising that the European powers beheld with dismay the progress of principles fraught with such calamitous consequences, according to the admission of their own partisans, in the countries where they had commenced.

[1] Lac. viii. 355, 356.

The language of the French Government towards the people of all other states was such as to excite the most serious apprehension of the friends of order in every civilized country. Not only the orators in

the clubs, but the members of the Assembly, openly proclaimed the doctrine of fraternization with the revolutionary party all over the world. The annexation of the states of Avignon, and the Venaisin, was early marked by Mr Burke as the indication of an ambitious spirit, which erelong the limits of Europe would not contain.

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Menacing language of the French to other states.

The annexation of this little state to the French Republic was the more remarkable that it was the first decided aggression on the part of its rulers upon the adjoining nations, and that it was committed on an independent sovereign with whom not even the pretence of a quarrel existed, and who was not alleged to have entered into any hostile alliances against that power. This was followed up in the same year by the seizure of Porentrui, part of the dominions of the Bishop of Bâle.[1]

Sept. 17, 1791.

Oct. 4, 1791.

[1] Parl. Hist. xxxiv. 1316. Ann. Reg. xxxiii. 199, 206; xxxiv. 39.

The French Revolution surprised the European powers in their usual state of smothered jealousy or open hostility with each other. Catherine of Russia was occupied with her ambitious projects in the south-east of Europe, and her ascendency at the Courts of Berlin and Vienna was so great that no serious opposition was to be apprehended from their hostility. France had shortly before signed a commercial treaty with Great Britain, which was considered as indicating the ascendency of her great naval rival, and seriously impaired her influence on the continent of Europe; while Frederick the Great had recently before his death concluded the Convention of Berlin for the protection of Bavaria and the lesser powers from the ambition of the House of Austria. But the death of that great monarch, which took place in August, 1786, was an irreparable loss to the diplomacy of Europe at the very time

28th Sept. 1786.

22d Jan. 1785.

17th Aug. 1786.

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when, from the commencement of new and unheard-of dangers, his sagacity was most required.

His successor, Frederick William, though distinguished for personal valour, and not destitute of penetration and good sense, was too indolent and voluptuous to be qualified to follow out the active thread of negotiation which his predecessor had held. Hertzberg became, after the death of the late monarch, the soul of the Prussian Cabinet, and his whole object was to provide a counterpoise to the enormous preponderance of the two Imperial courts, which had recently become still more formidable from the intimate union which prevailed between Catherine and Joseph II., cemented by their common ambitious designs on Turkey, and which had been ostentatiously proclaimed to Europe during a voyage which the two potentates made together on the Volga to the Crimea and shores of the Black Sea. A treaty with France promised no satisfactory result in the distracted state to which that kingdom was now reduced. In these circumstances, an alliance of Great Britain, Prussia, and Holland, appeared the only means of providing for the balance of power in Europe, and, under the influence of Mr Pitt, a convention was concluded at Loo between these three powers, which again established the preponderance of England on the continent, and long preserved the balance of European power.[1] Thus, at the very time that the most appalling dangers were about to arise to the liberties of Europe from the revolutionary ambition of France on its western side, the views of its statesmen were turned to another quarter, and solely directed to prevent the aggrandizement of the military monarchies, who seemed on the point of swallowing up its eastern dynasties.[2]

13th June, 1788.

[1] Marten's Trait. v. 172.

[2] Hard. i. 52, 63.

Passionately desirous of military renown, Joseph II. addressed, early in 1788, a confidential letter to Frederick William, in which he openly avowed his designs on Turkey, and justified them by the practice of the Turks themselves and all the European powers in similar circumstances.* Though flattered by this mark of confidence, the Prussian Cabinet were not blinded to the danger which menaced Europe from the approaching dismemberment of Turkey, so rapidly following the second partition of Poland. Mean while the progress of the Moscovite and Imperial arms was daily more alarming: the throne of Constantinople seemed shaken to its foundation. Oczakow had fallen, and with it the bravest defenders of the Turkish power; the Prince of Saxe Cobourg and Suwarrow successively defeated vast bodies of Osmanlis at Fochzani and Martinesti, while Belgrade, the bulwark of Transylvania, yielded to the scientific measures of Marshal Laudohn; the Russians, on the shores of the Black Sea, had completely routed Hassan Pacha at Tobak, and, after a long siege, made themselves masters of Bender,

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* "The sword is drawn," said he, "and it shall not be restored to the scabbard till I have regained all that has been wrested by the Osmanlis from my house. My enterprise against Turkey has no other object but to regain the possessions which time and misfortunes have detached from my crown. The Turks consider it as an invariable maxim to seize the first convenient opportunity of regaining the possessions which they have lost. The House of Brandenburg has risen to its present pitch of glory by adopting the same principles. Your uncle wrested Silesia from my mother at a moment when, surrounded by enemies, she had no other support but her native grandeur of mind and the love of her people. During a century of losses Austria has made no proportional acquisition; for the larger portion of Poland, on the last partition, fell to Prussia. I hope these reasons will appear sufficient for me to decline the intervention of your Majesty; and that you will not resist my endeavours to Germanize some hundreds of thousands of Orientals."—HARD. i. 65, 66.

CHAP. VII. 1791. while the Imperialists, no less successful, reduced Bucharest, and spread themselves over all the northern shores of the Danube. Orsova had fallen; and the united Imperial armies, 250,000 strong, extending over a line four hundred miles in length, already, in the spring of 1790, menaced Gergevo and Widdin, and threatened instantaneous destruction to the Ottoman empire.[1]

[1] Ann. Reg. xxxi. 182, 200; & xxxiii. 1, 18. Hard. i. 68, 84.

Seriously alarmed at the dangers which evidently menaced Europe from the fall of the Turkish empire, Mr Pitt was indefatigable in his exertions, before it was too late, to arrest the march of the Imperial courts. By his means the bands were drawn closer between Prussia and Great Britain, and Frederick William, fully alive to the dangers which threatened his dominions from the aggrandizement of Austria, advanced, at the head of 100,000 men, to the frontiers of Bohemia. Unable to undertake a war at the same time on the Elbe and the Danube, and uneasy, both on account of the menacing aspect of France and the insurrection in Flanders, Austria paused in the career of conquest. Conferences were opened at Reichenbach, midway between the headquarters of the Prussian and Imperial armies; and, after some delay, preliminaries were signed, which concluded the differences between the Cabinets of Vienna and Berlin, and opened the way to the accommodation of the former with the Porte. The Prussian army immediately retired: 30,000 Austrians, under Marshal Bender, moved towards the Low Countries, and speedily reduced its discontented provinces to submission; while a truce was shortly after concluded for nine months between the Turks and Imperialists, which was followed by conferences at Sistow,[2] and at length a definitive treaty was signed

27th July, 1790.

[2] Hard. i. 83, 86. Ann. Reg. xxxiii. 17, 19.

at that place on the 4th August, 1791; while the Empress Catherine, who was not yet formally included in the pacification, formally intimated her intention of suspending hostilities to the Courts of St James and Berlin, and, as a gage of her sincerity, concluded at Verela a peace with the King of Sweden, who, at the instigation of England and Prussia, had taken up arms, and contended with undaunted valour against his gigantic neighbour.[1] CHAP. VII. 1791. Aug. 12, 1790. [1] Hard. i. 86, 87.

This general and rapid pacification of Europe, this stilling of so many passions, and allaying of so many jealousies, was not the result of accident. It arose from the general consternation which the rapid progress of the French Revolution occasioned, and the clear perception which all the cabinets now began to have of the imminent danger to every settled institution from the contagion of its principles. But amidst the general alarm, wiser principles were generally prevalent than could reasonably have been anticipated, as to the means of warding off the danger. Mr Pitt in England, Kaunitz at Vienna, and Hertzberg at Berlin, concurred in opinion, that it would be imprudent and dangerous to oppose the progress of innovation in France, if it could be moderated by a party in that country sufficiently strong to prevent it from running into excess; and that in the mean time, the strictest measures should be adopted which circumstances would admit, to prevent its principles from spreading into other states. Such were the maxims on which the conduct of England, Austria, and Prussia were founded during the first two years of the Revolution; though Catherine, more vehement and imperious in her disposition, or possibly more sagacious in her anticipations, never ceased to urge the necessity of a general confederacy to arrest

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the march of so formidable a convulsion. But circumstances at length occurred, which put a period to these moderate councils at Vienna and Berlin, and precipitated the European monarchies into the terrible contest which awaited them.[1]

[1] Hard. i. 85, 90.

From the time that Louis had been brought a prisoner to Paris on October 5, 1789, he had recommended to the King of Spain to pay no regard to any public act bearing his name, which was not confirmed by an autograph letter from himself; and in the course of the following summer, he authorized the Baron Breteuil, his former minister, to sound the German powers on the possibility of extricating him from the state of bondage to which he was reduced. In November, 1790, after he found that he was to be forced to adopt measures of hostility against the Church, he resolved to be more explicit; and in December, 1790, he addressed a circular to the whole sovereigns of Europe, with a view to the formation of a congress, supported by an armed force, to consider the means of arresting the factions at Paris, and re-establishing a constitutional monarchy* in France. This circular excited every where the warmest feelings of sympathy and commiseration; but the policy of the Cabinets, notwithstanding, con-

* "The dispositions of your Majesty," said he, in this circular, "have awakened my warmest gratitude, and I invoke them at this moment, when, notwithstanding my acceptance of the new constitution, the factions openly avow their intention of overturning the monarchy. I have addressed myself to the Emperor, the Empress of Russia, the Kings of Spain and Sweden, and have suggested the plan of a congress of the principal powers, supported by an armed force, as the best means of arresting the factions here, establishing a more desirable order of things in this kingdom, and preventing the malady, under which it labours, from extending to the adjoining states. I need hardly say, that the most absolute secrecy is required in regard to this communication."—HARD. i. 94, 95.

tinued divided,—that of Vienna still adhered to the necessity of recognising the revolutionary *régime*, those of St Petersburg and Stockholm openly proclaimed the necessity of an immediate crusade against the infected powers.[1] CHAP. VII. 1791. [1] Hard. i. 95, 97.

So early as the close of 1790, however, the violent proceedings of the National Assembly had brought them into collision with the states of the empire. The laws against the emigrants and priests, which were passed with so much precipitance by that body, infringed the rights of the German vassals of the French crown in Alsace and Lorraine, whose rights were guaranteed by the treaty of Westphalia; and the Emperor, as the head of the empire, addressed a remonstrance to the French King on the subject. Overruled by his revolutionary Ministry, Louis made answer, that the affair was foreign to the empire, as the princes and prelates affected were reached as vassals of France, not as members of the empire, and that indemnities had been offered. This answer was not deemed satisfactory; a warm altercation ensued; Leopold asserted, in a spirited manner, the rights of the German princes; and this dispute, joined to the obvious and increasing dangers of his sister, Marie Antoinette, gradually inclined the Emperor to more vigorous measures, and strengthened the bonds of union with Frederick William, whose chivalrous spirit and heroic courage more openly inclined towards the deliverance of the unhappy princess. The King of England, also, took a vivid interest in the misfortunes of the royal family of France, promising, as Elector of Hanover, to concur in any measures which might be deemed necessary to extricate them from their embarrassments, and he sent Lord Elgin to Leopold, who was then travelling in Italy, to concert 14th Dec. 1790.

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measures for the common object. An envoy from Prussia, at the same time, reached the Emperor, and to them was soon joined the Count d'Artois, who was at Venice, and brought to the scene of deliberation the warmth, courage, and inconsiderate energy, which had rendered him the first decided opponent of the Revolution, and ultimately proved so fatal to the fortunes of his family.[1]

[1] Hard. i. 100, 107.

Mean while, the King and Queen of France, finding their situation insupportable, and being aware that not only their liberty, but their lives were now endangered, resolved to make every exertion to break their fetters. With this view, they despatched secret agents to Brussels and Cologne, to communicate with the Emperor and King of Prussia; and Count Alphonso de Durfort was instructed to inform the Count d'Artois, that the King could no longer influence his Ministers; that he was in reality the prisoner of M. La Fayette, who secretly and hypocritically was conducting every thing to a republic; that they were filled with the most anxious desire to make their escape by the route either of Metz or Valenciennes, and placed entire reliance on the zeal and activity of their august relatives. Furnished with these instructions, Count Durfort left Paris in the end of April, 1791, and soon joined the Count d'Artois at Venice, who was already arranging, with the English and Prussian envoys, the most probable means of overcoming the scruples of the Emperor.[2]

[2] Hard. i. 105, 111. Bertrand de Molleville, Mem. iii. 147, 170.

When these different parties met with the Emperor at Mantua, on 20th May, 1791, the most discordant plans were submitted for his consideration. That of the Count d'Artois, which was really drawn up by M. Calonne, the former minister of Louis XVI., was the most warlike, and proposed the adop-

tion, in July following, of hostile measures. Alarmed by the menacing principles openly announced by the National Assembly, and by the growing symptoms of disaffection among their own subjects, the Emperor of Germany, the King of Sardinia, and the King of Spain, concluded an agreement at Mantua, in May 1791, by which it was concerted, "1. That the Emperor should assemble 35,000 men on the frontiers of Flanders, while 15,000 soldiers of the Germanic Body should present themselves in Alsace; 15,000 Swiss on the frontiers of Franche Compte; 15,000 Piedmontese on the frontiers of Dauphiny; and the King of Spain collect an army of 20,000 men on the Pyrenees. 2. That these forces should be formed into five armies, who should act on their respective frontiers of France, and join themselves to the malecontents in the provinces and the troops who had preserved their allegiance to the throne. 3. That in the following July, a protestation should be issued by the princes of the House of Bourbon, and immediately after a manifesto by the Allied Powers. 4. That the object of these assemblages of troops was, that the French people, terrified at the approach of the Allied forces, should seek for safety in submitting themselves to the King, and imploring his mediation." The sovereigns counted on the neutrality of England; but it was expected, from the assurances given by Lord Elgin, that, as Elector of Hanover, the English monarch would accede to the coalition.[1]

Treaty of Mantua, May 1791.

[1] Hard. i. Jom. i. 262. Pièces Just. No. 1. Mig. i. 131.

Mean while the Royal Family of France, following the councils of Baron Breteuil, and influenced by the pressing and increasing dangers of their situation, had finally resolved on escaping from Paris. While Louis and M. de Bouillé were combining

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the means of an evasion, either towards Montmedy or Metz, the principal courts of Europe were apprized of the design; Leopold gave orders to the government of the Low Countries to place at the disposal of the King, when he reached their frontiers, not only the Imperial troops, but the sums which might be in the public treasury; while the King of Sweden, stimulated by his chivalrous spirit, and the instances of Catherine of Russia, drew near to the frontiers of France, under pretence of drinking the waters, but in reality to receive the august fugitives. The Emperor, the Count d'Artois, and M. Calonne, however, strongly opposed the contemplated flight as extremely hazardous to the Royal Family, and calculated to retard rather than advance the ultimate settlement of the affairs of France. They were persuaded that the only way to effect this object, so desirable to that country and to Europe, was to support the Royalist and Constitutional party in France, by the display of such a force as might enable them to throw off the yoke of the revolutionary faction, and establish a permanent constitution by the consent of King, Nobles, and People. Impressed with these ideas, he addressed a circular * from Padua to the principal powers, in which he announced the

July 6, 1791.

* He invited the Sovereigns to issue a joint declaration.—"That they regard the cause of his most Christian Majesty as their own; that they demand that that prince and his family should forthwith be set at liberty, and permitted to go wherever they chose, under the safeguard of inviolability and respect to their person; that they will combine to avenge, in the most striking manner, every attempt on the liberty, honour, or security of the King, the Queen, or the royal family; that they will recognise as legitimate only those laws which shall have been agreed to by the King when in a state of entire liberty; and that they will exert all their power to put a period to an usurpation of power, which has assumed the character of an open revolt, and which it behoves all established governments for their own sake to repress."—HARD. i. 116.

principles according to which, in his opinion, the common efforts should be directed. At the same time Count Lamarck, a secret agent of Louis, came to London to endeavour to engage Mr Pitt in the same cause; but nothing could induce the English Government to swerve from the strict neutrality which, on a full consideration of the case, they had resolved to adopt.[1] At Vienna, however, the efforts of the anti-revolutionary party were more successful; and on the 25th July, Prince Kaunitz and Bischofswerder signed, on the part of Austria and Prussia, a convention, wherein it was stipulated that the two courts should unite their good offices to combine the European powers to some common measure in regard to France, and that they should conclude a treaty of alliance, as soon as peace was established between the Empress Catherine and the Ottoman Porte, and that the former power, as well as Great Britain, the States-General, and the Elector of Saxony, should be invited to accede to it. This convention, intended to put a bridle on the ambition of Russia on the one hand, and of France on the other, deserves attention as the first basis of the grand alliance which afterwards wrought such wonders in Europe.[2]

[1] Hard. i. 114, 119.

25th July, 1791.

[2] Hard. i. 119, 121.

The pressing dangers of the Royal Family of France, after the failure of the flight to Varennes, and their open imprisonment in the Tuileries by the revolutionists, soon after suggested the necessity of more urgent measures. It was agreed for this purpose, that a personal interview should take place between the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia, to concert measures on that all-important subject. This led to the famous meeting at Pilnitz, which took place in August, 1791, between the Emperor and the King of Prussia. There was framed

Treaty of Pilnitz, Aug. 27, 1791.

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the no less celebrated Declaration of Pilnitz, which was conceived in the following terms:—"Their Majesties, the Emperor and King of Prussia, having considered the representations of Monsieur, brother of the King, and of his Excellency the Count d'Artois, declare conjointly, that they consider the situation of the King of France as a matter of common interest to all the European sovereigns. They hope that the reality of that interest will be duly appreciated by the other powers, whose assistance they will invoke, and that in consequence, they will not decline to employ their forces conjointly with their Majesties, in order to put the King of France in a situation to lay the foundation of a monarchical government, conformable alike to the rights of sovereigns and the wellbeing of the French nation. In that case, the Emperor and King are resolved to act promptly with the forces necessary to attain their common end. In the mean time, they will give the requisite orders for the troops to hold themselves in immediate readiness for active service." [1] * It was alleged by the French, that besides this, several secret articles were agreed to by the Allied Sovereigns; but no sufficient evidence has ever been produced to substantiate the allegation.[2]

[1] Jom. i. 265. Pièces Just. No. 1.

[2] Ann. Reg. 1792, 86, 87.

Although these declarations appeared abundantly

* "As far as we have been able to trace," said Mr Pitt, "the Declaration signed at Pilnitz referred to the imprisonment of Louis XVI.; its immediate view was to effect his deliverance, if a concert sufficiently extensive could be formed for that purpose. It left the internal state of France to be decided by the King restored to his liberty, with the free consent of the States of the kingdom, and it did not contain one word relative to the dismemberment of the country." [3]—"This, though not a plan for the dismemberment of France," said Mr Fox, in reply, "was, in the eye of reason and common sense, an aggression against it. There was, indeed, no such thing as a Treaty of Pilnitz; but there was a Declaration, which amounted to an act of hostile aggression." [4]

[3] Parl. Hist. xxxiv. 1315.

[4] Ib. 1356.

hostile to the usurpation of government by the democracy of France, the Allied Powers soon proved that they had no serious intention at that period of going to war. On the contrary, their measures evinced, after the declaration of Pilnitz, that they were actuated by pacific sentiments; and, in October 1791, it was officially announced by M. Montmorin, the minister of foreign affairs, to the Assembly, "that the King had no reason to apprehend aggression from any foreign power."* Their real object was to induce the French, by the fear of approaching danger, to liberate Louis from the perilous situation in which he was placed. Their forces were by no means in a condition to undertake a contest.[1] This is admitted by the ablest of the Republican writers.†

[1] Bot. i. 73. Jom. i. 191. Lac. ix. 24. Ann. Reg. xxxiv. 86.

Nor did the actions of these powers belie their

* "We are accused," said M. Montmorin, the minister of foreign affairs, in a report laid before the Assembly on 31st October, 1791, "of wishing to propagate our opinions, and of trying to raise the people of other states against their governments. I know that such accusations are false, so far as regards the French Ministry; but it is too true that individuals, and even societies, have sought to establish with that view correspondences in the neighbouring states; and it is also true, that all the princes, and almost all the governments of Europe, are daily insulted in our incendiary journals. The King, by accepting the constitution, has removed the danger with which you were threatened; nothing indicates at this moment any disposition on their part to a hostile enterprise."[2]

[2] Jom. i. 286. Pièces Just. No. 6.

† "The declaration of Pilnitz," says Thiers, "remained without effect; either from a cooling of zeal on the part of the Allied Sovereigns, or from a sense of the danger which Louis would have run, after he was, from the failure of the flight to Varennes, a prisoner in the hands of the Assembly. His acceptance of the constitution was an additional reason for awaiting the result of experience, before plunging into active operations. This was the opinion of Leopold and his minister Kaunitz. Accordingly, when Louis notified to the foreign courts that he had accepted the constitution, and was resolved faithfully to observe it, Austria returned an answer entirely pacific, and Prussia and England did the same."[3]

[3] Th. ii. 19.

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declaration: No warlike preparations were made by the German states, no armies were collected on the frontiers of France, and accordingly, when the struggle began next year, they were taken entirely by surprise. France had 130,000 men on the Rhine, and along her eastern frontier, while the Austrians had only 10,000 men in the Low Countries.[1]

[1] Ann. Reg. xxxiii. 206. Th. ii. 78.

In truth the primary and real object of the Convention of Pilnitz was the extrication of the King and Royal Family from personal danger: and no sooner did this object appear to be gained by their liberation from confinement, and the acceptance of the constitution, than the Coalesced Sovereigns laid aside all thoughts of hostile operations for which they were but ill prepared, and which the urgent state of affairs in Poland, ready to be swallowed up by the ambition of Catherine, rendered in an especial manner unadvisable. When Frederick William received the intelligence, he exclaimed—"At length then the peace of Europe is secured." The Emperor testified his satisfaction at the acceptance of the constitution, in a letter addressed to Louis; and shortly after despatched a circular to all the sovereigns of Europe, in which he announced that the King's acceptance of the constitution had removed the reason for hostile demonstrations, and that they were in consequence suspended.* The Cabinet of Berlin

* "His Majesty announces to all the courts, to whom he transmitted his first circular, dated Padua, 6th July, that the situation of the King of France, which gave occasion to the said circular, having changed, he deems it incumbent upon him to lay before them the views which he now entertains on the subject. His Majesty is of opinion, that the King of France is now to be regarded as free; and, in consequence, his acceptance of the constitution, and all the acts following thereon, are valid. He hopes that the effect of this acceptance will be to restore

entered entirely into the same sentiments; and the opinion was general, both there and at Vienna, that the troubles of France were at length permanently appeased by the great concessions made to the democratic party; and that prudence and address were all that was now necessary to enable the French monarch to reign, if not with his former lustre, at least without risk, and in a peaceable manner.[1] CHAP. VII. 1791. [1] Hard. i. 157, 159.

These being the views entertained by the two powers whose situation necessarily led them to take the lead in the strife, it was of comparatively little importance what were the feelings of the more distant or inferior courts. In the North, Catherine and Gustavus were intent on warlike measures, and refused to admit into their presence the ambassador who came to announce the King's acceptance of the constitution, upon the ground that he could not be regarded as a free agent; and the courts of Spain and Sardinia had coldly received the intelligence. Impressed with the idea that the King's life was seriously menaced, and that he was, even in accepting the constitution, acting under compulsion, these Northern and Southern potentates entered into an agreement, the purport of which was, that an armament of 36,000 Russians and Swedes were to be conveyed from the Baltic to a point on the coast of Normandy, where they were to be disembarked and march direct to Paris, while they were supported by 19th Oct. 1791.

order in France, and give an ascendency to persons of moderate principles, according to the wish of his most Christian Majesty; but as these appearances may prove fallacious, and the disorders of license and the violence towards the King may be renewed, he is also of opinion, that the measures concerted between the sovereigns should be suspended, and not entirely abandoned, and that they should cause their respective ambassadors at Paris declare, that the coalition still subsists, and that, if necessary, they would still be ready to support the rights of the King and of the monarchy."—*Letter*, 23*d October*, 1791.—HARD. i. 159.

CHAP. VII. 1791. a hostile demonstration from Spain and Piedmont on the Pyrenees and Alps: a project obviously hopeless if not supported by the forces of Austria and Prussia on the Rhine, and which the failure of the expedition to Varennes, and the subsequent course of events, entirely dissipated.[1]

[1] Hard. i. 159, 163.

Mean while the Count d'Artois, and emigrant nobility, taking counsel of nothing but their valour, and relying on the open support and encouragement afforded them by the Courts of Stockholm and St Petersburg, proceeded with the rashness and impetuosity which, in every period of the Revolution, have been the characteristic of their race. Numerous assemblages took place at Brussels, Coblentz, and Ettenheim: the Empress Catherine, in a letter addressed to Marshal Broglie, which they ostentatiously published, manifested the warm interest which she took in their cause; horses and arms were purchased, and organized corps of noble adventurers already began to be formed on the right bank of the Rhine. Transported with ardour at so many favourable appearances, the exiled princes addressed to Louis an open remonstrance, in which they strongly urged him to refuse his acceptance to the constitution which was about to be submitted to him; represented that all his former concessions had led only to impunity, to every species of violence, and the despotism of the most abandoned persons in the kingdom; protested against any apparent consent which he might be compelled to give to the constitution, and renewed the assurances of the intention of themselves and the Allied Powers speedily to deliver him from his fetters.[2]

Sept. 10, 1791.

[2] Hard. i. 152, 153, 165.

The only point that remained in dispute between the Emperor and the French King was, the indem-

nities to be provided to the German princes and prelates who had been dispossessed by the decrees of the National Assembly; but on this point Leopold evinced a firmness worthy of the head of the empire. Early in December he addressed to them a formal letter, in which he announced his own resolution and that of the Diet "to afford them every succour which the dignity of the Imperial Crown and the maintenance of the public constitutions of the empire required, if they did not obtain that complete restitution or indemnification which existing treaties provided." Notwithstanding this, however, the Cabinets of Vienna and Berlin still entertained so confident an opinion that the differences with France would terminate amicably, and that Louis, now restored to his authority, would speedily do justice to the injured parties, that they not only made no hostile preparations whatever, but withdrew a large proportion of their troops from the Flemish provinces.[1]

1791.

[1] Hard. i. 169, 171.

In truth, though they felt the necessity of taking some measures against the common dangers which threatened all established institutions with destruction, the Allied Sovereigns had an undefined dread of the magical and unseen powers with which France might assail them, and pierce them to the heart through the bosom of their own troops. The language held out by the National Assembly and its powerful orators, of war to the palace and peace to the cottage; the hand of fraternity which they offered to extend to the disaffected in all countries who were inclined to throw off the yoke of oppression; the seeds of sedition which its emissaries had so generally spread through the adjoining states, diffused an anxious feeling among the friends of order throughout the world, and in-

It was abandoned by the Allies.

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spired the dread, that by bringing up their forces to the vicinity of the infected districts, they might be seized with the contagion, and direct their first strokes against the power which commanded them. England, notwithstanding the energetic remonstrances of Mr Burke, was still reposing in fancied security; and Catherine of Russia, solely bent on territorial aggrandisement, was almost entirely absorbed by the troubles of Poland, and the facilities which they afforded to her ambitious projects. Prussia, however anxious to espouse the cause of royalty, was unequal to a contest with revolutionary France; and Austria, under the pacific Leopold, had entirely abandoned her military projects since the throne of Louis had been nominally re-established after the state of thraldom, immediately consequent upon the flight to Varennes, had been relaxed. Accordingly, the protestation and manifesto contemplated in the agreement at Mantua never were issued, and the military preparations provided for by that treaty never took place. Of all the powers mentioned in the agreement, the Bishop of Speirs, the Elector of Treves, and the Bishop of Strasburg, alone took up arms; and their feeble contingents, placed in the very front of danger, were dissolved at the first summons of the French Government.[1]

[1] Lac. ix. 24, 25, 26. Th. ii. 76, 77, 78. Dum. 410. Bot. i. 73, 75. Ann. Reg. xxxiv. 86, 87. Hard. i. 172, 180.

The French Revolutionary party resolve on war.

But it was no part of the policy of the ruling party at Paris to remain at peace. They felt, as they themselves expressed it, "that their Revolution could not stand still; it must advance and embrace other countries, or perish in their own." Indeed, the spirit of revolution is so nearly allied to that of military adventure, that it is seldom that the one exists without leading to the other. The same restless activity, the same contempt of danger, the same

craving for excitation, are to be found in both: it is extremely difficult for the fervour excited by a successful revolt to subside till it is turned into the channel of military exploit. Citizens who have overturned established institutions, who have tasted of the intoxicating draught of popular applause, who have felt the sweets of unbridled power during the brief period which elapses before they fall under the yoke of despots of their own creation, are incapable of returning to the habits of pacific life. The unceasing toil, the obscure destiny, the humble enjoyments of laborious industry, seem intolerable to men who have shared in the glories of popular resistance; while the heart-stirring accompaniments, the licentious habits, the captivating glory of arms, appear the only employment worthy of their renown. The insecurity of property and fall of credit which invariably follow any considerable political convulsion, throw multitudes out of employment, and increase the necessity for some drain to let off the tumultuous activity of the people. It has, accordingly, been often observed, that democratic states have, in every age, been the most warlike, and the most inclined to aggression upon their neighbours;[1] and the reason must be the same in all periods, that revolutionary enterprise both awakens the passions, and induces the necessity which leads to war.

[1] Mitford's History of Greece. Sismondi's Rep. Ital.

Declamations of the Girondists in favour of war.

The party of the Girondists, who were at that period the ruling power in France, were resolutely bent on war. The remarkable speech has already been given which Isnard, on November 29, 1791, delivered in the National Assembly.[2] Soon after repeated philippics, in still more violent language, were pronounced in the Assembly by Brissot and Vergniaud against the European powers, which, even according to the

[2] See *ante*, 368.

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admission of the French themselves, "were so many declarations of war, and imprudent provocations, which were calculated to put the French in hostility with all Europe." "The information of Brissot, the profound political views which he developes, are so entirely at variance with the sophisms with which his speech abounds," says Jomini, "that one would be inclined to suppose he had been the secret agent of the English Government, if we did not know that his errors at that period were shared by all the most enlightened men of France. An orator, enthusiastic even to madness, was alone capable of bringing on his country by such harangues, when torn within and supported without, the hatred of all the European chiefs. No paraphrase can convey an adequate idea of the violence of the leaders of the Assembly at that period: we must bequeath their speeches to posterity, as frightful proofs of what can be effected by an ill-directed enthusiasm and spirit of party."[1]

[1] Jom. i. 198. Pièces Just. i. 7, 8, & 9.

"You are about," said Brissot, on 29th December, 1791, "to judge the cause of kings: show yourselves worthy of so august a function: place yourselves above them, or you will be unworthy of freedom. The French Revolution has overturned all former diplomacy; though the people are not yet every where free, governments are no longer able to stifle their voice. The sentiments of the English on our Revolution are not doubtful: they behold in it the best guarantee of their own freedom. It is highly improbable that the British Government will ever venture, even if it had the means, to attack the French Revolution; that improbability is converted into a certainty, when we consider the divisions of their Parliament, the weight of their public debt, the declining condition of their Indian affairs. England would never

Dec. 29, 1791.

hesitate between its king and its liberty: between the repose of which it has so much need, and a contest which would probably occasion its ruin. Austria is as little to be feared: her soldiers, whom her princes in vain seek to estrange from the people, remember that it is among them that they find their friends, their relations; and they will not separate their cause from that of freedom. The successor of Frederick, if he has any prudence, will hesitate to ruin for ever, in combating our forces, an army which, once destroyed, will never be restored. In vain would the ambition of Russia interfere with our Revolution: a new Revolution in Poland will arrest her arms, and render Warsaw the centre of freedom to the East of Europe. Search the map of the world, you will in vain look for a power whom France has any reason to dread. If any foreign states exist inclined for war, we must get the start of them. He who is anticipated is already half vanquished. If they are only making a pretence of hostile preparations, we must unmask them, and in so doing proclaim to the world their impotence. That act of a great people is what will put the seal to our Revolution. War is now become necessary: France is bound to undertake it to maintain her honour: she would be for ever disgraced if a few thousand rebels or emigrants could overawe the organs of the law. War is to be regarded as a public blessing. The only evil you have to apprehend is, that it should not arise, and that you should lose the opportunity of finally crushing the insolence of the emigrants. Till you take that decisive step, they will never cease to deceive you by diplomatic falsehood. It is no longer with governments we must treat, it is with their subjects."[1]

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[1] Jom. i. Pièces Just. No. 7, 299.

"The mask is at length fallen," said the same ora-

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tor, on the 17th January, 1792. "Your real enemy is declared. General Bender has revealed his name: it is the Emperor. The Electors were mere names, put forward to conceal the real mover—you may now despise the emigrants; the Electors are no longer worthy of your resentment: fear has prostrated them at your feet. You must anticipate his hostility: Now is the time to show the sincerity of your declaration, an hundred times repeated, that you are resolved to have freedom or death.—Death! you have no reason to fear it—consider your own situation and that of the Emperor—your constitution is an eternal anathema against absolute thrones: all kings must hate it; it incessantly acts as their accuser: it daily pronounces their sentence; it seems to say to each, 'To-morrow you will not exist, or exist only by the tolerance of the people.' I will not say to the Emperor with your committee, 'Will you engage not to attack France or its independence?' but I will say, 'You have formed a league against France, and therefore I will attack you;' and that immediate attack is just, is necessary, is commanded alike by imperious circumstances and your oaths."[1] "The French," said Fauchet, on 17th January, 1792, "after having conquered their own freedom, are the natural allies of all free people. All treaties with despots are null in law, and cannot be maintained in fact, without involving the destruction of our Revolution. We have no longer occasion for ambassadors or consuls; they are only titled spies. When others wish our alliance, let them conquer their freedom; till then, we will treat them as pacific savages. Let us have no war of aggression; but war with the princes who conspire on our frontier with Leopold, who seeks to undermine our liberties—cannon are our negotiators—bayonets and millions of freemen our ambassadors."[2]

[1] Jom. i. 319. Pièces Just. No. 7.

[2] Jom. i. 323, 324.

Brissot was resolved, at all hazard, to have a war with Austria: he was literally haunted day and night by the idea of a secret Austrian Cabinet which governed the court, and was incessantly thwarting the designs of the revolutionists. Every thing depended on him and the Girondists, for the European powers were totally unprepared for a contest, and too much occupied with their separate projects to desire a conflict with a revolutionary state in the first burst of its enthusiasm. If the Girondists could have reconciled themselves to the King, they would have disarmed Europe, turned the emigrants into ridicule, and maintained peace. But Brissot and Dumourier were resolved at all hazards to break it. The former went so far as to propose, that some French soldiers should be disguised as Austrian hussars, and make a nocturnal attack on the French villages; upon receipt of the intelligence, a motion was to have been made in the Assembly, and war, it was expected, would have been instantly decreed in the enthusiasm of the moment. His anxiety for its commencement was indescribable; De Graves, Clavière, and Roland hesitated, on account of the immense responsibility of such an undertaking, but Dumourier and he uniformly declared that nothing but a war could consolidate the freedom of France, disclose the enemies of the constitution, and unmask the perfidy of the court. Their whole leisure time was employed in studying maps of the Low Countries, and meditating schemes of aggrandizement in that favourite object of French ambition.[1] CHAP. VII. 1792.

[1] Dum. 410, 411.

When such was the language of the leading men in the French Government and National Assembly, it is of little moment to detail the negotiations and mutual recriminations which led to the commencement

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of hostilities by the French Government. The French complained, and apparently with justice, that numerous bodies of emigrants were assembled and organized into military bodies at Coblentz, and on other points on the frontier; that the Elector of Treves and the other lesser powers had evaded all demands for their dispersion; that Austrian troops were rapidly defiling towards the Brisgau and the Rhine, and that no satisfactory explanation of these movements had been given.[1]

[1] Mig. i. 167. Jom. i. 202.

Mutual recriminations, which lead to war.

April 20, 1792.

The Imperialists complained with not less reason, that the French affiliated societies were striving to spread sedition through all the conterminous states; that Piedmont, Switzerland, and Belgium, were agitated by their exertions; that the Parisian orators and journals daily published invitations to all other people to revolt, and offered them the hand of fraternity if they did so; that Avignon and the Venaisin had, without the colour of legal right, been annexed to France; and the Catholics and nobles in Alsace deprived of their possessions, honours, and privileges, in violation of the treaty of Westphalia. The ultimatum of Austria was, that the monarchy should be re-established on the footing on which it was placed by the royal ordinance of June 23, 1789; that the property of the church in Alsace should be restored; the fiefs of that province, with the seignorial rights, given back to the German princes, and Avignon, with the Venaisin, to the Pope. These propositions were rejected; and Dumourier, who had now succeeded to the portfolio of foreign affairs, induced the French King to commence hostilities, in the hope of being able to overrun Flanders before any considerable Austrian forces could be brought up to its support.[2] On the 20th April, 1792, Louis had

[2] Jom. i. 205. Pièces Just. No. 13. Mig. i. 167.

the melancholy duty of declaring war against his own brother-in-law, the King of Hungary and Bohemia. CHAP. VII 1792.

The real intentions of the allies at this juncture, and the moderation of the views with which they were inspired in regard to the war, are well illustrated by a note communicated by the Cabinets of Berlin and Vienna to the Danish Government,—in which, renouncing all idea of interfering in the internal affairs of France, they limit their views, even after war had been commenced by France, to the formation of a bulwark against the revolutionary principles of the French republic, and the obtaining of indemnities for the German princes.* This note is the more remark- May 12, 1792.

* "The object of the alliance is twofold. The first object concerns the rights of the dispossessed princes, and the dangers of the propagation of revolutionary principles; the second, the maintenance of the fundamental principles of the French monarchy. The first object is sufficiently explained by its very announcement; the second is not as yet susceptible of any proper determination.

"The Allied Powers have unquestionably no right to insist, from a great and independent power such as France, that every thing should be re-established as it was formerly; or that it shall adopt such and such modifications in its government. It results from this, that they will recognise as legal any modification of the monarchical government which the King, when enjoying unrestrained liberty, shall agree to with the legal representatives of the nation. The forces to be employed in this enterprise must be proportioned to its magnitude, and to the resistance which may probably be experienced. With a view to the arrangement of these objects, the city of Vienna is proposed as a convenient station; but when the armies are assembled, a congress must be established nearer France than that city, followed by a formal declaration of the objects which the allies have in view in their intervention."—HARD. i. 391, 392.

The same principles were announced by Frederick William, to Prince Hardenberg, in a secret and confidential conversation which that statesman had with his sovereign on July 12, 1792. He declared, "that France should not be dismembered in any of its parts; that the Allies had no intention of interfering in its internal government; but that, as an indispensable preliminary to the settlement of the public disturbances, the King should be set at liberty, and reinvested with his full authority; that the ministers of religion should be restored to their altars, and the dispossessed proprietors to their estates, and that France should pay the expenses of the war."—HARD. i. 400.

CHAP. VII. 1792. able, that it embraces precisely the principles which, announced two-and-twenty years afterwards, in the plains of Champagne by the Allied Sovereigns, brought the war to a triumphant conclusion.

In contemplation of the approaching struggle, a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, had been, Feb. 7, 1792. on 7th Feb. 1792, concluded between Sweden and Austria. But one of the contracting parties did not long survive this measure. On March 1st, Leopold died, leaving his son, Francis II., to succeed to his extensive dominions; and a fortnight after, Gustavus, March 16, 1792. King of Sweden, was assassinated at a masked ball. It seemed as if Providence were preparing a new race of actors for the mighty scenes which were to be performed.

Leopold expired on the 1st March, of a mortification in the stomach. He was succeeded by his son FRANCIS, then hardly twenty-four years of age, whose reign was the most eventful, for long the most disastrous, and ultimately the most glorious in the Austrian annals. He had been brought up at Florence, at the court where his father exerted the philosophic beneficence of his disposition; and had married four years the Princess Elizabeth of Wirtemberg, who died in childbed on the 8th Feb. 1790; after which, the future emperor married, in the same year, the Princess Theresa of Naples. The first measures of his reign were popular and judicious: Kaunitz was continued prime minister, and with him were joined Marshal Lascy, long the friend of Leopold, and Count Francis Colleredo, his former preceptor. He suppressed those articles in the journals, in which he was loaded with praise, observing, "It is by my future conduct that I am alone to be judged worthy of praise or blame." Leopold, at his accession, had ordered all the anonymous and secret communications with which a

young prince is usually assailed, to be burnt: Francis went a step farther, he issued a positive order against any of them being received. When the list of pensioners was submitted to his inspection, he with his own hand erased the name of his mother, observing that it was unbecoming that she should be dependent on the bounty of the state. With such bright colours did the dawn of this eventful and glorious reign arise.[1] CHAP. VII. 1792. [1] Hard. i. 255, 267.

Still Great Britain preserved a strict neutrality. During the whole of 1792, pregnant, as we shall immediately see, with great events, and which brought France to within a hairbreadth of destruction, no attempt was made to take advantage of her weakness, to wreak on that unhappy country the vengeance of national rivalry. England did not, in the hour of France's distress, retaliate upon her the injuries inflicted in the American war. This fact was so notorious, that it was constantly admitted by the French themselves. "There is but one nation," said M. Kersaint in the National Assembly, on Sept. 18, 1792, "whose neutrality on the affairs of France is decidedly pronounced, and that is England."[1] Great Britain still strictly neutral. [1] Ann. Reg. xxxiv. 181.

But with the progress of events the policy of Great Britain necessarily underwent a change. The 10th of August came; the throne was overturned, and the royal family put in captivity; the massacres of September stained Paris with blood; and the victories of Dumourier rolled back to the Rhine the tide of foreign invasion. These great events inspired the revolutionary party with such extravagant expectations, that the continuance of peace on the part of England became impossible. In the frenzy of their democratic fury, they used language, and adopted measures, plainly incompatible with the peace or But the 10th Aug. overturns all these resolutions.

CHAP. VII. 1792. tranquillity of other states. A Jacobin Club of 1200 members was established at Chamberry, in Savoy, Oct. 1792. and 100 of its most active members were selected as travelling missionaries, "armed with the torch of reason and liberty, for the purpose of enlightening the Savoyards on their regeneration and imprescriptible rights."[1]

[1] Ann. Reg. xxxiv. 135.

War was declared against the King of Sardinia on Sept. 15, 1792. An address was voted by this club to the French Convention, as "the legislators of the world," and received by them on 20th October, 1792. They ordered it to be translated into the English, Spanish, and German languages. The rebellious Savoyards next constituted a Convention, in imitation of that of France, and offered to incorporate themselves with the great Republic. On November 21st, this deputation from Savoy was received by the National Assembly, and welcomed with the most rapturous applause; and the president addressed the deputies in a speech, in which he predicted the speedy destruction of all thrones, and regeneration of the human race; and assured the deputies, that "regenerated France would make common cause with all those who are resolved to shake off the yoke, and obey only themselves." The French Convention were not slow in accepting the proffered dominion of Savoy: the committee, to whom it was remitted to consider the subject, reported, "that all considerations, physical, moral, and political, call for the incorporation of that country: all attempts to connect it with Piedmont are fruitless; the Alps eternally force it back into the domains of France; the order of nature would be violated if they were to live under different laws;" and the Assembly unanimously united Savoy with the French Republic,

French system of propagandism.

under the name of the Department of Mont Blanc. CHAP. VII.
The seizure of Savoy was immediately followed by 1792.
that of Nice, with its territory, and Monaco, which Oct. 27,
were formed into the department of the Maritime 1792.
Alps. "Let us not fear," said the reporter, who spoke the opinion of the Convention with only one dissentient voice, "that this new incorporation will become a source of discord. It adds nothing to the hate of oppressors against the French Revolution; it adds only to the means of the power by which we shall break their league. The die is thrown: *we have rushed into the career: all governments are our enemies*—all people are our friends: we must be destroyed, or they shall be free: and the axe of liberty, after having prostrated thrones, shall fall on the head of whoever wishes to collect their ruins."[1]

[1] Ann. Reg. xxxiv. 139. Bot. i. 88.

Italy was the next object of attack. "Piedmont," said Brissot, in his report on Genoa, "must be free. Your sword must not be returned to its scabbard, before all the subjects of your enemy are free; before you are encircled by a girdle of republics." To facilitate such a work, a French fleet cast anchor in the bay of Genoa, a Jacobin club was established in that city, where the French commanders assisted, and from which adulatory addresses were voted to the French Convention; while Kellerman, on assuming the command of the army of the Alps, informed his soldiers, that "he had received orders to conquer Rome, and that these orders should be obeyed." The French ambassador at Rome was so active in endeavouring to stimulate the people to insurrection, that at length, on 14th January, 1793, when proceeding in his carriage to one of his assemblies, he was seized by the mob, at whom he had discharged a pistol, and murdered in the streets. This atrocious action

CHAP. VII. 1792. naturally excited the most violent indignation in the Convention, and a decree passed, authorizing the executive to take the most summary measures of vengeance.[1] Nor was Switzerland more fortunate in avoiding the revolutionary tempest. Geneva did not long escape. A French army, under General Montesquieu, approached its walls, but that general evinced some hesitation at taking a step which was equivalent to declaring war against the Helvetic Confederacy. Brissot, however, in a laboured report on the subject, declared, "That the revolution must take place there, or our own will retrograde," and insisted on the Swiss troops being withdrawn from the city, that is, on its being delivered over unarmed to the revolutionary faction. To this humiliating condition the Swiss submitted, and in consequence, on 27th December, the revolutionists overturned the government, and delivered over that celebrated city to the French troops. Nor were the small German princes neglected; the Elector Palatine, though all along remaining neutral, had his property on the Lower Rhine put under sequestration, and considerable portions of the territories of Hesse-Darmstadt, Weid-Runchel, and Nassau-Sarbrook, annexed to the neighbouring departments of France.[2]

Jan. 14, 1793.

[1] Bot. i. 237.

Dec. 27, 1792.

[2] Ann. Reg. xxxiv. 153. Bot. i. 96, 97, 237.

French declaration of war against all nations.

At length, on November 19th, a decree was unanimously passed by the Assembly, which openly placed the French republic at war with all established governments. It was in these terms: "The National Convention declares, in the name of the French nation, that it will grant *fraternity and assistance to all people who wish to recover their liberty;* and it charges the executive power to send the necessary orders to the generals, to give succour to such people, and to defend those citizens who have

suffered, or may suffer, in the cause of liberty."[1] Brissot himself, at a subsequent period, styled this decree "absurd, impolitic, and justly exciting the disquietudes of foreign cabinets."[2] And this was followed up, on December 15th, by a resolution so extraordinary and unprecedented, that no abstract of its contents can convey an idea of the spirit of the original.*

[1] Ann. Reg. xxxiv. 153.

[2] Brissot à ses Commettans, 83. London edition.

This decree was immediately transmitted to the generals on the frontier, with a commentary and explanatory notes, more violent if possible than the

* "The National Convention, faithful to the principles of the sovereignty of the people, which will not permit them to acknowledge any of the institutions militating against it, decrees as follows:—1. In all those countries which *are or shall be* occupied by the armies of the French Republic, the generals shall immediately proclaim, in the name of the French people, the abolition of *all existing imposts and contributions*, of tithes, feudal and manorial rights, all real and personal servitude, and generally of all privileges. 2. They shall proclaim the *sovereignty of the people*, and the suppression of all existing authorities; they shall convoke the people to nominate a provisional government, and shall cause this decree to be translated into the language of that country. 3. All agents, or officers of the former government, military or civil, and all individuals reputed noble, shall be ineligible to any place in such provisional government on the first election. 4. The generals shall forthwith place under the safeguard of the French Republic all property, movable or immovable, belonging to the treasury, the prince, his adherents and attendants, and to all public bodies and communities, both civil and religious, &c. 9. The provisional government shall cease as soon as the inhabitants, after having declared the sovereignty of the people, shall have organized a free and popular form of government. 10. In case the common interest should require the further continuance of the troops of the Republic on the foreign territory, the Republic shall make the necessary arrangements for their subsistence. 11. The French nation declares that it will *treat as enemies the people, who, refusing or renouncing liberty and equality, are desirous of preserving their prince and privileged castes, or of entering into an accommodation with them.* The nation promises and engages not to lay down its arms, until the sovereignty and liberty of the people, on whose territory the French army shall have entered, shall be established, and not to consent to any arrangement or treaty with the princes and privileged persons so dispossessed, with whom the Republic is at war."[3]

[3] Ann. Reg. xxxiv. 155.

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original. To assist them in their labours, commissaries were appointed with all the armies, whose peculiar duty it was to superintend the revolutionizing of the conquered districts. They were enjoined "not to allow even a shadow of the ancient authorities to remain;" and "not only to encourage the writings destined to popular instruction, the patriotic societies, and all the establishments consecrated to the propagation of liberty, but themselves to have immediate communication with the people, and counteract, by frequent explanations, all the falsehoods by which evil-minded persons could lead them astray."[1]* The decree of 19th November was accompanied by an exposition, addressed to the general of every army in France, containing a schedule as regularly digested as any by which the ordinary routine of business in any department of the state could be digested. Each commander was furnished with a general blank formula of a letter for all the nations of the world, beginning with these words, "The people of France to the people of ———, greeting. We are come to expel your tyrants."—And when it was proposed in the National Convention, on the motion of M. Baraillan,[2] to declare expressly that the decree of 19th November was

[1] Lac. xxxiv. 153, 156.

[2] Parl. Hist. xxxiv. 1310, 1311.

* The ablest writers of France fully admit the insane desire for foreign warfare, which at that period had seized on its government. "Every one," says Marshal St Cyr, "of the least foresight, at the close of 1792, was aware of the dangers which menaced the Republic, and were lost in astonishment, I will not say at the imprudence, but the folly of the Convention, which, instead of seeking to diminish the number of its enemies, seemed resolved to augment them by successive insults, not merely against all kings, but every existing government. A blind and groundless confidence had taken possession of their minds; they thought only of dethroning kings by their decrees, leaving the armies on which the Republic depended in a state of entire destitution." —St Cyr, *Memoirs*, i. 19, 20.

confined to the nations with whom they were at war, the motion was negatived by a large majority.

These unprecedented and alarming proceedings, joined to the rapid increase and treasonable language of the Jacobin societies in this country, excited a very general feeling of disquietude in Great Britain. The army and navy had both been reduced in the early part of the year 1792, in pursuance of a recommendation from the throne, and the English Government had resisted the most earnest solicitations to join the confederacy against France. Even after the throne was overturned on the 10th August, the British Ministry enjoined their ambassador, before leaving a capital where there was no longer a stable government, to renew their assurances of neutrality; and the French minister, M. le Brun, declared, that the French Government were confident that "the British Cabinet would not at this decisive moment depart from the justice, moderation, and impartiality which it had hitherto manifested." But when the National Convention began openly to aim at revolutionizing all other countries, their proceedings were looked upon with distrust: and this was heightened into aversion when they showed a disposition to include England among the states, to whose rebellious subjects they extended the hand of fraternity.[1]

Alarm excited in Great Britain by these proceedings.

[1] Ann. Reg. xxxiv. 163, 165. & State Papers, 327.

The London Corresponding, and four other societies, on 7th November, presented an address, filled with the most revolutionary sentiments, to the National Assembly, which was received with the warmest expressions of approbation; and so strongly did the belief prevail in France that England was on the verge of a convulsion, that on the 21st November, the President Gregorie declared,[2] that these "respectable islanders, once our masters in the social art,

[2] Ann. Reg. xxxiii. 137, and State Papers, 344, 346.

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have now become our disciples; and, treading in our steps, soon will the high-spirited English strike a blow which shall resound to the extremity of Asia."

Threatened opening of the Scheldt.

At the same period the French committed an act of aggression on the Dutch, then in alliance with Great Britain, which necessarily brought them in collision with the latter power. By the treaty of Munster, it had been provided that the Scheldt was to remain for ever closed; but the career of conquest having brought the French armies to Antwerp, a decree of the Convention was passed on November 16th, ordering the French commander-in-chief to open the Scheldt: and by another decree, passed on the same day, the French troops were ordered to pursue the fugitive Austrians into the Dutch territory. These directions were immediately carried into effect by a French squadron, in defiance of the Dutch authorities, sailing up the Scheldt to assist in the siege of the citadel of Antwerp. The French did not attempt to justify these violations of subsisting treaties on any grounds recognised by the law of nations, but contended, "that treaties extorted by cupidity, and yielded by despotism, could not bind the free and enfranchised Belgians." What rendered this aggression altogether inexcusable, was that the French had only eight years before, viz. in 1784, interfered to prevent a similar opening of the Scheldt, when attempted by Austria, then mistress of the Low Countries, and had succeeded in resisting that aggression upon the ground of its violating the rights of the United Provinces, as established by the treaty in 1731.[1]

[1] Le Brun's Memorial to the Convention. Ann. Reg. xxxiii. 165; & xxxiv. 173. Ségur, ii. 78, 79.

In these alarming circumstances the English militia were called out, the Tower was put in a state of

defence, and Parliament summoned for the 13th December. In the speech from the throne, the perilous nature of the new principles of interference with other states, proclaimed and acted upon by the French rulers, was strongly pointed out. "I have carefully observed," said the King, "a strict neutrality in the present war on the continent, and have uniformly abstained from any interference in the internal affairs of France; but it is impossible to see, without the most serious uneasiness, the strong and increasing indications which have there appeared of an intention to excite disturbances in other countries, to disregard the rights of neutral nations, and to pursue views of conquest and aggrandisement, as well as to adopt towards my allies the States-General, who have observed the same neutrality with myself, measures which are neither conformable to the law of nations, nor to the stipulations of existing treaties." An angry correspondence, in consequence, ensued between the British Cabinet and the French ambassador, which having led to no satisfactory result, the armaments of England continued without intermission, and corresponding preparations were made in the French harbours. "England," said Lord Grenville, in a note to M. Chauvelin, the French envoy, "never will consent that France should arrogate to herself the power of annulling at pleasure, and under cover of a pretended natural right, of which she makes herself the sole judge, the political system of Europe, established by solemn treaties, and guaranteed by the consent of all the powers. This government will also never see with indifference, that France shall make herself, either directly or indirectly, sovereign of the Low Countries, or general arbitress of

Preparations for war in England.

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the rights and liberties of Europe. If France is really desirous of maintaining friendship and peace with England, let her renounce her views of aggression and aggrandisement, and confine herself within her own territory, without insulting other governments, disturbing their tranquillity, or violating their rights." [1]

[1] Ann. Reg. xxxiv. 168, 178; & State Papers, No. 1.

To this it was replied by M. Le Brun, the French envoy,—"The design of the Convention has never been to engage itself to make the cause of some foreign individuals the cause of the whole French nation; but when a people, enslaved by a despot, shall have had the courage to break its chains; when this people, restored to liberty, shall be constituted in a manner to make clearly heard the expression of the general will; when that general will shall call for the assistance and fraternity of the French nation, it is then that the decree of the 19th will find its natural application; and this cannot appear strange to any one." [2]

[2] Memorial by Le Brun. Ann. Reg. xxxiv. 174.

The intentions of Great Britain, at this period, in regard to France, and the line of conduct which, in conjunction with her allies, she had chalked out for herself before the war was precipitated by the execution of the King, cannot be better illustrated than by reference to an official despatch from Lord Grenville to the British ambassador at St Petersburg, on the subject of the proposed confederation against the French Republic. From this important document it appears, that England laid it down as the basis of the alliance, that the French should be left entirely at liberty to arrange their government and internal concerns for themselves; and that the efforts of the allies should be limited to preventing their interfe-

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rence with other states, or extending their conquests or propagandism beyond their own frontier.* CHAP. VII 1792.

But though these were the views of the English Cabinet, very different ideas prevailed with the rulers of French affairs. The determination of the French Government to spread their principles of revolution in England, was strongly manifested in a circular letter, addressed by Monge, the minister of marine, to the inhabitants of the French seaports, on December 31,

* In this important state paper Lord Grenville observes—"The two leading points on which such explanation will naturally turn are, the line of conduct to be pursued previous to the commencement of hostilities, with a view, if possible, to avert them; and the nature and amount of the forces which the powers engaged in this concert might be enabled to use, supposing such extremities unavoidable. With respect to the first, it appears on the whole, subject, however, to future consideration and discussion with the other powers, that the most advisable step to be taken would be, that sufficient explanation should be had with the powers at war with France, in order to enable those not hitherto engaged in the war to propose to that country terms of peace. That these terms should be the withdrawing their arms within the limits of the French territory, the abandoning their conquests, the rescinding any acts injurious to the sovereignty or rights of any other nation, and the giving, in some unequivocal manner, a pledge of their intention no longer to foment troubles or to excite disturbances against other governments. In return for these stipulations, the different powers of Europe, who should be parties to this measure, might engage *to abandon all measures or views of hostility against France, or interference in their internal affairs,* and to maintain a correspondence and intercourse of amity with the existing powers in that country *with whom such a treaty may be concluded.* If on the result of this proposal, so made by the powers acting in concert, these terms should not be accepted by France, or being accepted, should not be satisfactorily performed, the different powers might then engage themselves to each other to enter into active measures for the purpose of obtaining the ends in view; and it may be considered whether in such case they might not reasonably look to some indemnity for the expenses and hazards to which they would necessarily be exposed." Such were the principles on which England was willing to have effected a general pacification in Europe; and it will appear in the sequel that these principles, and no others, were constantly maintained by her through the whole contest, and in particular, that the restoration of the Bourbons was never made or proposed as a condition of its termination.—See *Parl. Hist.* xxxiv. 1313, 1314.

CHAP. VII. 1793. 1792, more than a month before the declaration of war. "The King and English Parliament," said he, "wish to make war upon us, but will the English republicans suffer it? Already these freemen testify the repugnance which they feel at bearing arms against their brethren the French. We will fly to their assistance, we will make a descent in that island, we will hurl there 50,000 caps of liberty, we will plant among them the sacred tree, and hold out our arms to our republican brethren. The tyranny of their government shall soon be destroyed." When such was the language used by the French ministers towards a people with whom they were still at peace, the maintenance of any terms of accommodation was obviously out of the question, the more especially when such sentiments met with a responsive voice from a numerous party on this side of the Channel.[1]

[1] Ann. Reg. xxxiv. 179.

War declared, Feb. 3, 1793.

After some time spent in the correspondence, matters were brought to a crisis by the execution of Louis, which took place on January 21, 1793. As there was now no longer even the shadow of a government in the French capital, with whom to maintain a diplomatic intercourse, M. Chauvelin received notice to leave the British dominions within eight days, with a notification, however, that the English Government would still listen to terms of accommodation. And on February 3, the French Convention, on the report of Brissot, unanimously declared war against Great Britain.[2]

[2] Ann. Reg. xxxiv. 199.

Such is a detailed account of the causes which led to this great and universal war, which speedily embraced all the quarters of the globe, continued, with short interruptions, for more than twenty years, led to the occupation of all the capitals in Europe by foreign armies, and finally brought the Cossacks and

the Tartars to the French metropolis. We shall search in vain in any former age of the world, for a contest conducted on so gigantic a scale, or with such general exasperation, in which such extraordinary exertions were made by governments, or such universal enthusiasm manifested by their subjects. Almost all the European history fades into insignificance, when compared to the wars which sprung out of the French Revolution, and the conquests of Marlborough or Turenne are lifeless when placed beside the campaigns of Napoleon.

On coolly reviewing the events which led to the rupture, it cannot be said that any of the European powers were to blame in provoking it. The French Government, even if they had possessed the inclination, had not the power to control their subjects, or prevent that communication with the discontented in other states, which excited so much alarm in their Governments. The Austrians and Prussians had good cause to complain of the infringement of the treaty of Westphalia, by the violent dispossessing of the nobles and clergy in Alsace, and justly apprehended the utmost danger to themselves, from the doctrines which were disseminated in their dominions by the French emissaries. Though last to abandon their system of neutrality, the English were ultimately drawn into the contest, by the alarming principles of foreign interference, which the Jacobins avowed after the 10th August, and the imminent danger in which Holland was placed, by the victorious advance of the French armies to the banks of the Scheldt.

The principle of non-interference with the domestic concerns of other states, perfectly just in the general case, is necessarily subject to some exceptions.

CHAP. VII. 1793. No answer has ever been made to the observation of Mr Burke, "that if my neighbour's house is in flames, and the fire is likely to spread to my own, I am justified in interfering to avert a disaster which promises to be equally fatal to both." If foreign nations are warranted in interposing in extreme cases of tyranny by rulers to their subjects, they must be equally entitled to prevent excessive severity by a people towards their sovereign. The French, who so warmly and justly supported the treaty of July 6, 1827, intended to rescue Greece from Ottoman oppression, who took so active a part against Great Britain, in the contest with her American colonies, and invaded the Netherlands, and besieged Antwerp in 1832, professedly to preserve the peace of Europe, have no right to complain of the treaty of Pilnitz, which had for its object to rescue the French King from the scaffold, and the French nation from a tyranny which proved worse to themselves than that of Constantinople.

The grounds on which the war was rested by the British Government were afterwards fully developed in an important declaration, issued to the commanders of their forces by sea and land on 29th October, 1793, shortly after the execution of the Queen. It was stated in that noble state paper—"In place of the old government has succeeded a system destructive of all public order—maintained by prescriptions, exiles, and confiscations without number—by arbitrary imprisonments, by massacres, which cannot be remembered without horror, and at length by the execrable murder of a just and beneficent sovereign, and of the illustrious princess who with unshaken firmness has shared all the misfortunes of her royal consort, his protracted sufferings, his cruel captivity,

and ignominious death. The allies have had to encounter acts of aggression without pretext, open violation of all treaties, unprovoked declarations of war; in a word, whatever corruption, intrigue, or violence could effect, for the purpose, openly avowed, of subverting all the institutions of society, and extending over all the nations of Europe that confusion which has produced the misery of France.

"This state of things cannot exist in France without involving all the surrounding powers in one common danger, without giving them the right, without imposing it upon them as a duty, to stop the progress of an evil which exists only by the successive violation of all law and property, and attacks the fundamental principles by which mankind is united in the bonds of civil society. The King will impose no other than equitable and moderate conditions, not such as the expense, the risk, and sacrifices of the war might justify, but such as his Majesty thinks himself under the indispensable necessity of requiring, with a view to these considerations, and still more to that of his own security, and of the future tranquillity of Europe. His Majesty desires nothing more sincerely than thus to terminate a war which he in vain endeavoured to avoid, and all the calamities of which, as now experienced by France, are to be attributed only to the ambition, the perfidy, and the violence of those whose crimes have involved their own country in misery, and disgraced all civilized nations.

"The King promises on his part the suspension of hostilities, friendship, and as far as the course of events will allow, of which the will of man cannot dispose, security and protection to all those who, by declaring for a monarchical form of government,

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shall shake off the yoke of sanguinary anarchy, of that anarchy which has broken all the most sacred bonds of society, dissolved all the relations of civil life, violated every right, confounded every duty, which uses the name of liberty to exercise the most cruel tyranny, to annihilate all property, seize on all possessions, which founds its power on the pretended consent of the people, and itself carries fire and sword through extensive provinces for having demanded their laws, their religion, and their lawful sovereign." This is real eloquence—this the true statement of the grounds of the war, in language worthy of the great cause of freedom to which the nation was thenceforward committed, and which was never abandoned till the British armies passed in triumph through the walls of Paris.[1]

[1] Ann. Reg. 1793. State Papers, 199. Parl. Hist. xxx. 1597.

CHAPTER VIII.

CAMPAIGN OF 1792.

State of the French Armies at the commencement of the War—Of the Allies—French invasion of the Low Countries—Its Defeat—Consequent consternation at Paris—Allied Armies collect on the Rhine—Invasion of France by Duke of Brunswick—His line of advance—Surrender of Longwy and Verdun—Movements of Dumourier—Description of the Argonne Forest—He seizes the Passes before the Prussians—Dilatory motion of the Allies—Clairfait forces one of the Passes—Dumourier falls back to St Menehould—Rout of part of the French Army during the Retreat—French take post at St Menehould—Union of their Armies there—Consternation at Paris and in their Rear—Cannonade of Valmy—French retain their position—Distress of the Allies: they resolve to Retreat—Various motives for this—Terror at Paris—Conferences opened for the Retreat of the Allies—They commence their Retreat, and regain the Rhine—Operations in Flanders—Bombardment of Lille—Raising of the Siege—Movements on the Upper Rhine—Capture of Mayence by Custine—Plans for the Invasion of Flanders—Commenced by Dumourier—Battle of Jemappes—Tardy advance of Dumourier—Conquest of Flanders—Jealousy of the General at Paris—Advance of the Republicans to the Scheldt and Meuse—Fall of Antwerp—Of Liege and Namur—Dumourier puts his Army into Winter Quarters—Violent Decree of the Convention, and great revolutionary changes in Belgium—Cruel oppression of the People of Flanders by the French—War commenced against Piedmont—Conquest of Savoy and Nice—Threatened Invasion of Switzerland—It is deferred—Measures to Revolutionize Savoy and Nice—They are Incorporated with France—Conclusion of the Campaign on the Upper Rhine—Unsuccessful Operations of the Republicans; they Recross the Rhine—Immense Results of this Campaign—Precipitance of the Allies—Ruinous Consequences of the want of vigour on their side at first—Great danger of France at that time—General Reflections on the Campaign.

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"PEACE," says Ségur, "is the dream of the wise: War is the history of man. Youth listens without attention to those who seek to lead it by the paths of reason to happiness; and rushes with irresistible violence into the arms of the phantom which lures it by the light of glory to destruction."[1] Reason, wisdom,

[1] Ségur's Memoirs, ii. 59.

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experience, strive in vain to subdue this propensity. For reasons superior to the conclusions of philosophy, its lessons in this particular are unheeded by the generality of mankind; and whole generations, impelled by an irresistible impulse, fly to their own destruction, and seek, in contending with their fellow-creatures, a vent for the ungovernable passions of their nature. "To overawe or intimidate," says Mr Ferguson, "and when we cannot persuade with reason, to resist with fortitude, are the occupations which give its most animating exercise, and its greatest triumphs to a vigorous mind; and he who has never struggled with his fellow-creatures is a stranger to half the sentiments of mankind."[1]

[1] Ferguson, 39, Civil Society.

But we should greatly err if we imagined that this universal and unextinguishable passion is productive only of suffering, and that from the work of mutual destruction no benefit accrues to the future generations of men. It is by these tempests that the seeds of improvement are scattered over the world; that the races of mankind are mingled together, and the energy of Northern character blended with the refinement of Southern civilisation. It is amidst the extremities and dangers of war that antiquated prejudice is abandoned, and new ideas disseminated; that invention springs from necessity, and improvement is stimulated by example; and that by the intermixture of the different races of men, the vices and asperity of each are softened, and the benefits of mutual communication extended. Rome conquered the world by her arms, and humanized it by her example: the Northern conquerors spread amidst the corruption of ancient civilisation the energy of barbarian valour; the Crusades diffused through the Western the knowledge and arts of the Eastern

World. The wars which sprung out of the French Revolution, produced effects as great, and benefits as lasting, upon the human species; and amidst their bloody annals may be discerned the rise of principles destined to change the frame of society, and purify the face of the moral world.

State of the French armies.

France having decided upon war, directed the formation of three considerable armies. In the North the Marshal Rochambeau commanded 40,000 infantry and 8000 cavalry, cantoned from Dunkirk to Philipville. In the centre, La Fayette was stationed with 45,000 infantry and 7000 cavalry, from Philipville to Lautre; while Marshal Luckner, with 35,000 infantry and 8000 cavalry, observed the course of the Rhine from Bâle to Lauterburg. In the South, General Montesquieu, with 50,000 men, was charged with the defence of the line of the Pyrenees and the course of the Rhone. But these armies were formidable only on paper. The agitation and license of the Revolution had loosened the bands of discipline, and the habit of judging and discussing political subjects, destroyed the confidence of the soldiers in their commanders. It might have been foreseen, too, that as soon as the war became defensive, one half of this force would be required to garrison the triple line of fortresses which secured the course of the Rhine from foreign aggression.[1]

[1] Jom. ii. 3. Toul. ii. 119. Th. ii. 45, 46.

The national enthusiasm, however, speedily produced numerous recruits for the armies. The villages, the hamlets, sent forth their little bands of armed men to swell the forces on the frontier; the roads were covered with battalions of the National Guard, hastening to the scene of action. But public spirit will not supply the want of military organization, nor courage make up the deficiency of discipline. All

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the early efforts of the French armies were unsuccessful, and had the allies been better prepared for the contest, or even duly improved the advantages they obtained, the war might have been terminated in the first campaign.[1]

[1] Toul. ii. 121. Jom. ii. 4.

Allied Forces.

To oppose these forces, the Allies had no sufficient armies ready; a sure proof that the military operations contemplated in the treaty of Pilnitz had been abandoned by the contracting powers. Austria and Prussia alone took the field; England was still maintaining a strict neutrality, and the forces of Russia, let loose from the Danube after the treaty of Jassy, were converging slowly towards Poland, the destined theatre of Muscovite ambition. Spain and Piedmont remained at peace. Fifty thousand Prussians were all that could be spared for so distant an operation as the invasion of France; and the Emperor, weakened by his bloody contests with the Turks, could with difficulty muster 65,000 along the whole line of the Rhine, from the lake of Constance to the Dutch frontier. The emigrant corps, assembled in the countries of Treves and Coblentz, and in the margravate of Baden, hardly amounted to 7000 men, ill fitted, by their rank and habits, for the duties of private soldiers in a fatiguing campaign, and they were not expected on the Rhine till the end of July.[2]

[2] Ann. Reg. 1791, 206. Jom. ii. 4, 5. Th. ii. 79.

French invasion of the Low Countries.

Encouraged by the inconsiderable amount of the Austrian forces in the Low Countries, an invasion of Flanders was attempted by the French. The troops were divided into four columns, destined to unite in the neighbourhood of Brussels, and on the 28th April put in motion; but in every direction they encountered discomfiture and disgrace. General Dillon, who advanced from Lille with 4000 men, was met by a detachment of the garrison of Tournay, and before

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the Austrians had made a single discharge, or even their cavalry had arrived in the field, the French took to flight, murdered their commander, and re-entered Lille in such confusion as to endanger that important fortress. The corps which advanced from Valenciennes, under the orders of Biron, had no better success; hardly had the cannonade begun on the 29th with the Imperial troops, when two regiments of dragoons fled, exclaiming, "Nous sommes trahis!" and speedily drew after them the whole infantry. On the following day, they were attacked by the Austrians under Beaulieu, and on the first onset fled to Valenciennes, exclaiming that they were betrayed, and were only rallied by Rochambeau with the utmost difficulty behind the Ruelle. The corps destined to advance from Dunkirk to Furnes, fell back upon hearing of these disasters, and General La Fayette judged it prudent to suspend the movement of his whole army, and to retire to his camp at Rancennes.[1]

They are defeated.

[1] Jom. ii. 16, 17. Th. ii. 78, 79, 80. St Cyr, i. 47, 48. Introduction. Toul. ii. 121.

Such were the fruits of the insubordination and license which had prevailed in the French armies ever since they revolted against their sovereign—a memorable example to succeeding ages of the extreme peril of soldiers taking upon them the task of politicians, and forgetting their military honour in the fancied discharge of social duties. The revolt of the French Guards, the immediate cause of the overthrow of Louis, brought France to the brink of destruction; with a more enterprising or better prepared enemy, the demoralization produced by the first defeats on the frontier, would have proved fatal to the national independence.[2] Had Napoleon or Wellington commanded the Austrians in Flanders, the French never would have been permitted to rejoin their colours;

[2] Jom. ii. 17.

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and if the Allies had been aware of the wretched state of their opponents, they would have advanced without hesitation to Paris. No reliance can be placed on troops, once the most effective, who have engaged in a revolution, till their discipline has been restored by despotic authority.

The extreme facility with which this invasion of Flanders was repelled, and the disgraceful rout of the French forces, produced an extraordinary effect in Europe. The Prussians conceived the utmost contempt for their new opponents, and it is curious to recur to the sentiments expressed by them at the commencement of the war. The military men at Magdeburg deemed the troops of France nothing but an undisciplined rabble—"Do not buy too many horses," said the Minister Bischoffswader to several officers of rank; "the comedy will not last long; the army of lawyers will soon be annihilated in Belgium, and we shall be on our road home in autumn."[1]

[1] Hard. i. 357. St Cyr, i. 50. Introd.

Consternation in consequence at Paris.

The Jacobins and war party in Paris, though extremely disconcerted by the disgrace of their arms, had the address to conceal their apprehensions. They launched forth the thunders of their indignation against the authors of the disasters. Luckner was appointed to succeed Rochambeau, who was dismissed, and tribunals were created for the trial of offences against military discipline. The most energetic measures were taken to reinforce the armies, and revive the national spirit, which the recent disasters had much depressed; and Luckner received orders to resume offensive operations.[2]

[2] Jom. ii. 19, 21. Th. ii. 80. Toul. ii. 125.

Feeble and irresolute, this old commander was ill qualified to restore the confidence of the army. His first operations were as unsuccessful as those of his predecessor, and he was obliged, after receiving a

severe check, to retire in haste to his own frontier. At the same time the advanced guard of La Fayette was surprised and defeated near Maubeuge, and his numerous army thrown into a state of complete discouragement. At that period, it seemed as if the operations of the French generals were dependent upon the absence of their enemies: the moment they appeared they were precipitately abandoned.[1]

[1] Th. ii. 80. Jom. ii. 22, 23.

Mean while, the Austrian and Prussian forces were slowly collecting on the frontier. The disgraceful tumult on the 20th June accelerated their movements, and M. Calonne incessantly urged the allied sovereigns to advance with rapidity, as the only means of extricating Louis from his perilous situation. The Prussians assembled in the neighbourhood of Coblentz in the middle of June: the disciplined skill of the troops, trained in the school of Potsdam, and the martial air of the Austrians, recently returned from the Turkish campaigns, seemed to promise an easy victory over the tumultuary levies of France.[2] The disorganization and discouragement of the French armies had arrived at the highest pitch before the invasion commenced, and Frederick William reckoned at least as much on the feebleness of their defence as on the magnitude of his own forces.

Allied armies collect on the frontiers.

[2] Toul. ii. 211. Jom. ii. 85. St Cyr, i. 62. Introd.

The Duke of Brunswick, who was intrusted with the command of the army, and first took the lead among the generals who combated the French Revolution, was a man of no ordinary capacity. Born in 1735, he was the son of Duke Charles of Brunswick, and his wife the sister of Frederick II. of Prussia. Early in life he evinced an extraordinary aptitude for the acquisition of knowledge; unhappily the habits of the dissolute court where he was brought up initiated him as rapidly into the vices and pleasures

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of corrupted life. During the Seven Years' War he was called to more animating duties, and became the companion in arms and friend of the Great Frederick; but the return of peace restored him to inactivity, mistresses, and pleasure. The voluptuous habits, which his marriage, in 1764, to the Princess Augusta, sister of George III., King of England, did not diminish, had no tendency, however, to extinguish the native vigour of his mind. His conversation was brilliant, his knowledge immense, his ideas clear, and delivered with the utmost perspicuity; but although the vivacity of his imagination made him rapidly perceive the truth, and anticipate all the objections which could be urged against his opinions, it had the effect of rendering him irresolute in conduct and perpetually the prey of apprehensions lest his reputation should be endangered—a peculiarity frequently observable in first-rate men of the second order, but never seen in the master spirits of mankind.[1]

[1] Mirabeau, Cour de Berlin, i. 231. Hard. i. 347, 351.

Jealous of his military reputation, and of the character which he had acquired of being, after the death of Frederick the Great, the ablest prince in Germany, he was unwilling to hazard both by engaging in the contest with revolutionary France, the perils of which he distinctly perceived. Nor were personal motives awanting to confirm him in this opinion. Previous to the commencement of hostilities, the Abbé Siêyes, and the party of philosophers in that country, had cast their eyes on this prince as the chief most capable of directing the Revolution, and at the same time disarming the hostility of Prussia, and they had even entered into secret negotiations with him on that subject. It may easily be imagined with what reluctance the

duke entered upon a course of hostilities which at once interrupted such an understanding, and possibly deprived him of the brilliant hope that he might one day be called to the throne of the Bourbons. Impressed with these ideas he addressed a secret memoir to the King of Prussia, full of just and equitable views on the course to be pursued in the approaching invasion, which it would have been well for the allies if they had strictly adhered to during the campaign.[1]*

[1] Hard. i. 349, 353.

In the views entertained at that period by the Prussian Cabinet and the Duke of Brunswick is to be found the true secret of the disasters of the campaign, and one powerful cause of the subsequent calamities which befell every part of Europe. The former were intent on iniquitous gains in Poland, and took the lead in the coalition in France, chiefly in order to gratify the wishes of the Empress Catherine, who was the head of the league for effecting the partition of that ill-fated country, and at the same time vehemently desirous of extinguishing the principles of the Revolution. The latter was apprehensive, lest his great reputation, which rested on no permanent or illustrious actions, should be endangered, and

* "You will understand better than me what an important effect the disposition of the interior of France must have on the operations of the campaign. It would be well to address a proclamation to the National Guards, announcing that we do not make war on the nation, that we have no intention of abridging their liberties, that we do not desire to overturn their constitution; but that we insist only for reparation to the German princes dispossessed in Alsace. That affair of the indemnities will occasion the greatest embarrassment, if we cannot prevail on the Emperor to give his consent to the changes which are commencing in Poland. For my own part, I give to acquisitions in Poland a decided preference to any that may be acquired in France; for by any attempt at territorial aggrandizement on that country, the whole spirit in which the war should be conducted will be changed."—*Mem. 19th Feb.* 1792—HARD. i. 353.

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his secret views in France blasted by too intemperate an hostility against that country. Thus both the government and the generalissimo were prepared to play false before they entered upon the campaign—they intended only to make a show of hostility on the Rhine, sufficient to propitiate the Semiramis of the North, and incline her to allow them as large a share as possible of the contemplated booty on the Vistula. Frederick William indeed was sincere in his desire to deliver the King of France and re-establish monarchical authority in his dominions, but, surrounded by ministers who had different objects in view, he was unable to act with the energy requisite to ensure success, nor was he aware of the difficulties to be encountered in its prosecution. The Duke of Brunswick alone was adequately impressed with the serious dangers which attended the proposed invasion, and in his memoir, already mentioned, strongly urged the necessity of "immediate and decisive operations, the more so as, without them, consequences of incalculable importance may ensue; for the French are in such a state of effervescence, that if not defeated in the outset, they may become capable of the most extraordinary resolutions."[1]

[1] Hard. i. 353, 357.

Dumourier, minister of foreign affairs at Paris, aware that Austria was totally unprepared for a war in the Low Countries, and strongly impressed with the idea that the real object of France should be to wrest those opulent provinces from the House of Hapsburg, counselled an immediate advance into Flanders, while at the same time, by means of secret agents, he prepared the minds of the discontented, both in that country and in Piedmont, to second the invasion of the Republicans. Aware of the intrigues which M. Semonville, the French

envoy, was carrying forward, the King of Sardinia refused to permit him to advance beyond Alexandria. Dumourier affected the utmost indignation at this slight put upon "the great nation" in the person of its plenipotentiary; but the Cabinet of Turin remained firm, and refused either to admit M. Semonville to the court, or make any submission to the indignant feelings of the Republicans.[1]

[1] Hard. i. 357, 369.

After much deliberation it was resolved to attempt the invasion by the plains of Champagne, the same quarter where an irruption was afterwards successfully achieved by the Allies in 1814. Great difficulties were experienced in regard to the corps of emigrants, which from the want of any aid either from Prussia or Austria, had not yet attained any consistent military organization; as, on the one hand, the Allies were apprehensive of exciting the nation by the sight of an armed invasion of the emigrant noblesse, while, on the other, the influence of those illustrious exiles, especially with the northern courts, rendered it an imprudent measure to give them any serious ground of complaint. At length a middle course was resolved on, to join the emigrant corps to the army, but keep it in reserve with the second line—a resolution which, how unhappy soever, was rendered unavoidable by the arrival of a courier from St Petersburg, bringing despatches, containing not only the entire concurrence of the Empress Catherine in the proposed hostile operation, but her resolution not to permit any change in the form of government in any European state—a declaration which,[2] under the veil of a general principle not likely to be disputed in despotic courts, concealed her secret design to make the recent changes in the

[2] Hard. i. 369, 383. May 3, 1792.

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Polish constitution a pretext for completing the partition of the Sarmatian plains.

The partitioning powers at length spoke openly out. On the 8th June, Frederick William, in concert with the Empress Catherine, replied to the King of Poland, that he entirely disapproved of the revolution so lately effected in the Polish dominions, and that nothing but an immediate invasion by the Russian and Prussian forces could be anticipated from such a step taken without their concurrence. At the same time 25,000 men, under Marshal Moellendorf, received orders to advance towards Warsaw. Thus, at the time when a cordial alliance of all the European Powers was imperatively called for to stem the torrent of the French Revolution, the seeds of weakness and disunion were already sown, from their unjustifiable projects of aggrandizement, on the shores of the Vistula.[1]

[1] Hard. i. 383, 389.

Mean while the King of France, not venturing openly to communicate with the Allied Sovereigns, despatched a secret envoy to Vienna with letters to Marshal Castries, whom he had selected to communicate between him and the exiled princes, containing the wisest and most salutary advice on the conduct to be pursued by the invading powers.* These

* "The safety of the monarchy," said Louis, "that of the king and all his family, the general security of persons and property, the stability of the order which may eventually succeed to the present confusion, the urgent necessity of abridging the duration of the crisis, and weakening the agitating powers,—all concur in recommending the views of his Majesty to all true Royalists. He fears, with reason, that a foreign invasion will induce a civil war in the interior, or rather a frightful *Jacquerie*; that is the object of his greatest apprehension. He ardently desires, in order to prevent the calamities, of which you appear to discard too lightly the consideration, that the emigrants should take no part in the approaching hostilities; that they should consult the interests of the

instructions were received, and deliberately considered, by the Allied Cabinets. They were strongly impressed at the time with the justice of his views, and gave the most solemn assurances to the envoy, July 20. Mallet du Pan, that their measures should be entirely regulated by them; but the advice was forgotten almost as soon as it was received, and the more intemperate wishes of the exiled princes subsequently gained too great an ascendency over the measures of the coalition.[1] 1 Hard. i. 402, 421.

On the 25th July the King of Prussia joined the army, and on the same day the proclamation was July 25. issued, which has been already given in the civil history of France, and which had so powerful an effect in exciting the patriotism and healing the divisions of the French people. This proclamation, though signed by the Duke of Brunswick, was drawn up by M. Calonne and the Marquis Lemon, in more violent terms than was originally intended, or than was consistent with the objects of the war, as set forth in the previous official declaration of the Prussian Cabinet,* in consequence of the intelligence

King, of the State, of their properties, and of all the Royalists in the interior, rather than their just resentment; and that, after having disarmed crime by their victories, and dissolved a fanatical league by depriving it of its means of resistance, they may, by a salutary revolution, prepare the way for a treaty of peace, in which the King and the Foreign Powers may be the arbiters of the destinies and laws of the nation."—*Instructions of Louis XVI. to Duc de Castries*—HARD. i, 402, 404.

* "There is no power," said the Prussian manifesto, "interested in the balance of power in Europe, which can behold with unconcern that great kingdom become a prey to anarchical horrors, which have in a manner *annihilated its political existence*;† there is no true Frenchman who must not desire to see such disorders terminated. To put a period to the anarchy in France, to establish with that view legal power on the

† Mr Burke was of the same opinion. "We may regard France," said he, "as now *nearly blotted out* from the political map of Europe."—*Speech in House of Commons, 9th Feb.* 1790—WORKS, v. 5, 6.

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which the Allied Powers had received of the secret offers made to the Duke by the Constitutional party in France, and the necessity which they thence conceived there was of committing him irrevocably against the Revolution. The objectionable passages were introduced against his will by the direct authority of the Emperor and King of Prussia; and so strongly impressed was the Duke of Brunswick with the unhappy consequences likely to arise from the publication of such a manifesto, that he tore to pieces the first copy brought to him for his signature, and ever after called it, "that deplorable manifesto." Certain it is, that if issued at all, it should only have been at the gates of Paris, and after decisive success in the field; and that to publish it at the outset merely of feeble and languid military operations, was the height of imprudence.[1]

[1] Hard. i. 427, 432.

Invasion of France. July 30, 1792.

On the 30th, the whole army broke up and entered the French territory. The Allied Army consisted of 50,000 Prussians, in the finest condition, and supported by an unusually large train both of heavy and field artillery; 45,000 Austrians, the greater part of whom were veterans from the Turkish wars; 10,000 Hessians, and upwards of 6000 French emigrants, dispersed by a most injudicious arrangement into separate corps. In all, 113,000 men: a formidable army, both from its numerical force and its warlike qualities, but hardly adequate to so great an undertaking as that of conquering France.[2]

[2] Compare Jom. ii. 4; & Toul. ii. 266. Ann. Reg. xxxv. 45. Jom. ii. 86, 87; & Hard. i.

base of monarchical authority, to secure by this means the other powers from the incendiary efforts of a frantic Jacobin band,—such are the objects which the King, in conjunction with his ally, proposes to himself in this noble enterprise, not only with the general concurrence of the powers of Europe, who recognise its justice and necessity, but with the approbation and well-wishes of every friend to the human race."—HARD. i. 425, 426.

The French armies destined to oppose this invasion, were by no means equal, either in discipline or equipment, to their antagonists; and they were soon paralysed by intestine divisions. The army of La Fayette, now not more than 28,000 strong, was posted in the neighbourhood of Sedan; Bournonville, between Maubeuge and Lille, with 30,000; Kellerman with 20,000 at Metz; Custine at Landau with 15,000; and Biron, in Alsace, with 30,000. In all, 123,000 men, but extremely defective both in discipline and subordination. Above 12,000 of their officers had joined the ranks of the emigrants, and those selected to supply their place had as yet no experience in the military art. But the revolution of the 10th August changed the command of the armies, and ultimately proved fatal to the Allies, not less from the energy which it imparted to the government, than the ability which it brought to the head of military affairs. La Fayette, having in vain endeavoured to raise the standard of revolt against the Jacobins, was compelled to fly for safety to the Austrian lines; and Luckner having disobeyed the Convention, the command of both their armies was intrusted to Dumourier; a man whose ardent spirit, indefatigable activity, and boundless resources, were peculiarly fitted to rescue France from the perilous situation in which it was placed.[1]

[1] Jom. i. ii. 104. Th. iii. 37, 39. St Cyr, i. 39.

A triple barrier defends France from invasion on its eastern frontier. The centre of this line, where an attack was threatened from the Allied forces, is covered by Thionville, Bitsch, Sarre Louis, Longwy, and Montmedy, in front, and Metz, Verdun, Sedan, and Mezieres in the rear; while the woody heights of the Ardennes forest, occupying a space of fifteen leagues between Verdun and Sedan, offers the most

Line of advance adopted by the Allies.

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serious obstacles to the passage of an army. It was by this line that the Allies resolved to invade France, as it was then supposed, what experience has since proved to be true, that a force of not less than 250,000 men would be requisite to make a successful irruption from the side of Switzerland or Flanders. Every thing seemed to announce success, and tended to recommend the most vigorous measures in seizing it. The French armies, scattered over an immense line, from the Alps to the ocean, were incapable of uniting for any common operation; and their state of disorganization was such, as to render it extremely doubtful whether they were either disposed or qualified to combine for effecting it.[1]

[1] Jom. ii. 86. Toul. ii. 295.

Three fortresses only lay on their road; Sedan, Longwy, and Verdun—all in a wretched state of defence; after which the army had nothing but a fertile plain to traverse on the road to Paris. In these circumstances, a powerful and rapid attack on the centre seemed the most prudent, as well as the most effectual, means of dispersing the forces of the Revolution, and reaching the heart of their power, before any effective array could be collected for its defence. There can be no question of the wisdom of the plan of operations; but the Allies were grievously mistaken in the degree of vigour required for carrying it into execution.[2]

[2] Jom. i. 90, 91. Th. iii. 40.

The invading army advanced with slowness, and apparent timidity, in a country which they professed to consider as the theatre of certain conquest. At length, after an inexplicable delay, the fortress of Longwy was invested on the 20th August; and a bombardment having been immediately commenced, the garrison, who were partly composed of volunteers, and divided in opinion, capitulated on the 23d.

Longwy surrenders, Aug. 23.

At the same time, intelligence was received of the flight of La Fayette from the army which he commanded, and that he had sought refuge from the violence of his soldiers within the Austrian lines. Every thing seemed to announce success; and if the Duke of Brunswick, taking advantage of the consternation of the moment, had fallen with the bulk of his forces upon the army round Sedan, now destitute of a commander, there can be no doubt that a blow might have been struck which would have spread such consternation among the revolutionary party, as would have led to the rapid termination of the war. Instead of doing so, however, the Allied army, following the preconcerted plan of operation, advanced on the great road, and, after an unaccountable delay of six days around Longwy, moved forward on the 29th, and on the 30th invested Verdun. On the 2d September this important fortress capitulated, after a feeble resistance; and there now remained no fortified place in a state of defence on the road to Paris.[1] *

And Verdun. Sept. 2.

[1] Th. iii. 42, 98. Jom. i. 101, 102.

After such extraordinary and unhoped for good fortune as the capitulation of the only fortresses which lay on their road, after an investment of a few days each, it was difficult to account either for the present inactivity, or ultimate disasters of the Allied army. The army round Sedan, now under the command of Dumourier, did not exceed 25,000 men,

* In the course of the march the King of Prussia met a young soldier with his knapsack on his back and an old musket in his hands. "Where are you going?" said the King. "To fight," replied the soldier. "By that answer," replied the monarch, "I recognise the noblesse of France." He saluted him, and passed on. The soldier's name has since become immortal; it was FRANCOIS CHATEAUBRIAND, then returning from his travels in North America to share in the dangers of the throne in his native country.—See CHATEAUBRIAND, *Memoirs*, 83, *Fragments*.

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little more than a fourth part of the Duke of Brunswick's force; and yet the other armies were so far distant, that on it almost exclusively depended the salvation of France.[1] But the dilatory conduct of the Allies, joined to the enterprise and genius of Dumourier, paralysed all these advantages. Nothing could rouse the Duke of Brunswick from his dilatory system, not even the urgent representations of the King of Prussia, who longed for decisive operations.*

[1] Toul. ii. 297, 298. Dum. ii. 387. Th. iii. 43.

Every thing depended upon the immediate occupation of the defiles of the Ardennes forest, the only remaining barrier between a victorious army of eighty thousand men and the capital. These wooded heights were only six leagues in advance of the Allies, and it was of the last importance to reach them before the enemy; for if once the war was carried into the plains beyond, there was little hope that the ill-disciplined troops of France would be able to withstand the

* The advantages which lay open to the invading army at this juncture, are thus set forth by the person, of all others best qualified to appreciate them—General Dumourier. "How did it happen," says he, "that, after the fall of Longwy on the 23d August, the enemy did not instantly resolve to march on Stenay and Monzow, and there annihilate the French army, or draw over the troops of the line to their side, in the perplexity in which they were after the dethronement of the King? Nothing is more certain than that, if they had done so, the French army would have disbanded; nay, there is reason to believe, that if some of the popular officers of the old *régime* had presented themselves at the advanced posts, a great part of the troops of the line, especially the cavalry, would have joined the allied army.

"When you are about to invade a country, torn by a revolution, when you know that you may rely on a large party in its bosom, when you would deliver a king in fetters, it should be a fixed principle, especially with a large army, to multiply your forces by rapidity of movement, and arrive like a clap of thunder at the capital, without giving the people time to recover from their consternation. After Longwy was taken, if the army at Sedan had been dispersed, no obstacles remained, either to the prosecution of a methodical campaign, or an immediate march to Paris."—DUMOURIER, iii. 32.

numerous and highly disciplined cavalry of the Prussians. The eagle eye of Dumourier speedily pitched on the sole defensible point, and placing his hand on the Argonne forest in the map,—"There," said he, "is the Thermopylæ of France: if I have the good fortune to arrive there before the Prussians, all is saved." His determination was instantly taken;[1] but it appears that the movement to the Argonne forest had been previously recommended by the Executive Council of Paris, and that he had only delayed executing it from an opinion, that the Allies would be detained several weeks before Longwy and Verdun, and that the best way of arresting their march was to threaten an invasion of the Low Countries.

[1] Dum. ii. 391. Th. iii. 88, 89. Toul. ii. 299.

The forest of Argonne is a wooded ridge, extending from the neighbourhood of Sedan, in a south-westerly direction, about thirteen leagues. Its breadth varies from one to four leagues. Five roads traverse it, leading into the rich and fertile districts of Evêches from the open and sandy plains of Champagne. The great road to Paris goes by the pass of Islettes: the other passes were named Grandpré, Chene Populeux, Croix au Bois, and Chalade. These roads required to be occupied and guarded before they were reached by the enemy, a perilous operation, as it involved a flank movement directly in front of a vastly superior hostile army. The ruinous effect of the delay round Longwy after the fall of that fortress, was now apparent; had the Allied forces moved on, instead of there waiting a week in inactivity, the war would have been carried into the plains of Champagne, and the broken ground passed before the French army could possibly have arrived.[2]

Description of the Argonne Forest.

[2] Jom. ii. 109. Toul. ii. 300. Th. iii. 90.

Clairfait, with the advanced guard of the Allies, was, on the 30th August, only six leagues from

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Dumourier seizes the passes of the Forest.

Islettes, the principal passage through the forest of Argonne; while the nearest posts of the French, commanded by Dillon, were distant ten leagues; and the nearest road to reach it lay directly in front of the Austrian vanguard. Determined, however, at all hazards, to gain the passes, Dumourier, on the 31st, took the bold resolution of pushing on directly across the Austrian vanguard. This resolution was entirely successful: the Austrians, ignorant of his designs, and intent only on covering the siege of Verdun, which was going forward, withdrew their advanced posts, and allowed the French to pass; and from the 1st to the 4th September, the whole army defiled within sight almost of their videttes, and occupied the passes: Dumourier himself taking his station at Grandpré, near the centre, with thirteen thousand men. He immediately fortified the position, and awaited in tranquillity the reinforcements, which he expected from the interior, the army of the centre, and that of the north. They were very considerable, for Bournonville and Duval were hastening from the army of Flanders with sixteen thousand men; while Kellerman, with twenty-two thousand, was expected in a few days from the neighbourhood of Metz. Large bodies were also advancing from Paris, where the Republican government was taking the most energetic measures for the public defence. Camps for the recruits were formed at Soissons, Meaux, Rheims, and Chalons, where numerous volunteers were daily arriving, animated with the greatest enthusiasm; while the sanguinary despots of Paris marched off thousands of citizens, reeking with the blood of the massacres in the prisons, to more honourable combats on the frontier. The whole reinforcements from the interior were ordered to assemble at St Ménéhould, a little in the rear

of the position of the army. The camp of the French general himself at Grandpré was one of uncommon strength. A succession of heights, placed in the form of an amphitheatre, formed the ground on which the army was placed: at their feet vast meadows stretched forth, in the midst of which the Aisne flowed in a deep stream, forming a valuable cover to the front of the camp. Two bridges only were thrown over the river, each of which was guarded by a strong advanced body. The enemy would thus be under the necessity of crossing the Aisne without the aid of bridges, traversing a wide extent of meadow, under the concentric fire of numerous batteries, and finally scaling a rugged ridge broken by woods, strengthened by intrenchments, and almost inaccessible. Confident in the strength of this position, Dumourier wrote to the minister of war in these terms:— "Verdun is taken: I am in hourly expectation of the Prussians: the camp at Grandpré and Islettes are the Thermopylæ of France; but I will be more successful than Leonidas."[1]

[1] Dum. ii. 394, 396; iii. 2. Toul. ii. 301. Jom. ii. 110, 111. Th. ii. 93, 94. St Cyr, i. 66. Introd.

Dilatory motions of the Allies.

While these energetic measures were going forward on the French side, the steps of the Allies, notwithstanding their extraordinary good fortune, were marked by that indecision, which, in a war of invasion, is the sure forerunner of defeat. It was evident from the position of the French army, and the numerous reinforcements hastening to them from every quarter, that every thing depended upon forcing the passes, and throwing them into confusion before their forces were augmented, or the moral energy acquired, which, in war, is even more important than numerical strength. Instead of this, their movements were unaccountably tardy, as if they wished to give the French time to collect their force before any

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decisive operations were commenced. Though Verdun capitulated on the 2d September, the army did not advance till the 5th, when it remained in position on the heights of Fromerville till the 11th, wasting in inactivity the most precious days of the campaign. At length, being informed of the occupation of the passes by Dumourier, and having completed his preparations, the Duke of Brunswick, on the 12th, moved a part of his forces to Landres, and remained there in perfect inactivity till the 17th, threatening the left of the French position.[1]

[1] Jom. ii. 115, 118. St Cyr, i. 67. Introd.

Clairfait seizes the pass of Croix au Bois.

To oppose this movement, Dumourier withdrew a considerable part of the forces which occupied the pass of Croix au Bois, one of the five which traversed the forest of Argonne, and was situated on the right of the line, to support the left, where an attack was anticipated. The consequence was, that, on the 12th, Clairfait established himself in that important post, and thus broke the French line, and threatened to take it in rear. Sensible of his error, the French general detached General Chazot to retake the position; but Clairfait not only maintained his ground, but threw back his opponents from the central corps of the army, and entirely turned the right of the French position. The situation of Dumourier was now highly critical; his force in the central camp at Grandpré did not exceed sixteen thousand men, while the whole Prussian army was in his front, and the Austrians under Clairfait were rapidly defiling into his rear. To complete his misfortunes, Kellerman, whose march from Metz had been unaccountably tardy, had not yet arrived; and it was evident that he could not effect a junction but in the rear of the position in the Argonne forest;[2] while the detachment intrusted with the defence of the pass of Chene Populeux, unable to resist the attacks of the

15th Sept.

[2] Dum. iii. 20, 21, 23, St Cyr, i. 67, 69. Jom. ii. 120, 121. Th. iii. 101, 102.

Austrians, abandoned their position, and fell back towards Chalons. "Never," says Dumourier, "was the situation of an army more desperate: France was within a hair-breadth of destruction."

In this extremity the French general resolved to evacuate entirely the line of the Argonne forest, and to fall back with all his forces to the position of St Ménéhould, a few leagues in his rear. Every thing depended upon gaining time: the heavy rains were already commencing, which promised to render a farther advance of the Allies extremely difficult, if not impracticable. The camp, in consequence, was raised at midnight, on the 15th; and on the 17th the whole army was collected in the rear, at St Ménéhould, where he resolved to remain firm till the expected reinforcements arrived. His forces did not exceed twenty-five thousand men; but their position was defended by a numerous and excellent artillery; while the reinforcements, which were daily expected, promised to raise it to seventy thousand combatants.[1]

Retreat of Dumourier to St Ménéhould.

[1] Jom. ii. 123. Dum. iii. 33. St Cyr, i. 69, 70. Introd.

During the retreat, however, an incident occurred which had wellnigh brought destruction on the whole army. General Chazot, who commanded the rearguard of ten thousand men, was attacked at Vaux by fifteen hundred Prussian hussars, and four pieces of horse artillery. The French troops instantly took to flight, disbanded themselves, rushed through the main body in the utmost confusion, and numbers fled as far as Rheims and Paris in the most dreadful alarm. But for the exertions of General Duval, who succeeded in re-organizing part of the rearguard, and of General Miranda, who restored order in the main body, the whole column would have been irretrievably routed. But the Prussian cavalry not being supported, were

Rout of part of the French army.

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at length obliged to retire, astonished at their easy success, and lamenting that so favourable an opportunity had been lost of destroying the French army. Many of the French troops fled thirty leagues and upwards from the field of battle, spreading consternation wherever they went, and declaring that all was lost. At six in the evening, after the troops had taken up their ground near Dammartin, a new panic seized the troops; the artillerymen, in haste, harnessed their horses to escape beyond the little river Bionne, and all the camp was in confusion. At length some degree of order was restored, by the dragoons in the general's escort striking the fugitives with the flats of their sabres; great fires were lighted, and the army rested in groups round them without any distinction or order.[1]

[1] St. Cyr, i. 71. Introd. Th. iii. 104, 105. Dum. iii. 30, 31. Jom. ii. 123.

"I have been obliged," said Dumourier, in his letter to the Convention, "to return from the camp of Grandpré; during the retreat, an unaccountable panic seized the army; ten thousand men fled from fifteen hundred Prussian hussars; the loss did not amount to fifty men; every thing is repaired, and I answer for the safety of France." But he was far from feeling, in reality, the confidence which these words seemed to indicate. The rout of so large a portion of his forces, demonstrated how little reliance was to be placed on his undisciplined levies, when performing movements in presence of a numerous and warlike enemy. He resolved, in consequence, to make the war one of positions, and to inspire his troops with fresh confidence by placing them behind unattackable intrenchments.[2]

[2] Dum. iii. 34. Th. iii. 106, 107.

The position of the new camp which he selected, was well calculated to effect these objects. Placed on a rising ground, in the centre of a large and open

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valley, it commanded all the country around; the centre of the army, under the command of Dumourier, faced towards Champagne, while the corps of Dillon was stationed on the road leading from Verdun, and still held the passes of Islettes and Chalade, through which the principal road to Paris was conducted. A numerous artillery defended all the avenues to the camp, and water was to be had in abundance from the river Aisne, which bounded its right side. In this position the French general anxiously awaited the arrival of the expected reinforcement.[1]

Takes post at St Ménéhould, Sept. 18.

[1] Dum. iii. 35, 36. Th. iii. 106, 107.

Terrified at the reports which they received of the rout at Vaux, Kellerman and Bournonville retired when almost close to the camp of St Ménéhould, the former to Vitry, the latter to Chalons. They would have been irretrievably separated, if the Allies had showed the least vigour in improving their advantages. But their extraordinary delay gave Dumourier time to reiterate his orders for an immediate junction, and at length, on the 19th, the whole three armies were united in the neighbourhood of St Ménéhould. The orders to Bournonville, were carried by an aide-de-camp of Dumourier, named MACDONALD, afterwards Duke of Tarentum, and victor of the field of Wagram.[2]

Union of the French armies, Sept. 19.

[2] Dum. iii. 37. Jom. ii. 124. Th. iii. 109.

Their arrival totally changed the state of affairs. The spirit of the French soldiers was prodigiously elated by so great an accession of strength. It was no longer a corps of 25,000 who maintained an unequal struggle with 80,000 enemies, but a great army, 70,000 strong, which sought to measure its strength with the invaders.

Mean while, disorder and dismay prevailed in the rear of the French position. The fugitives from

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Vaux, who fled almost thirty leagues into the interior, declared every where that the army was destroyed, that Dumourier was a traitor, and that all was lost. The national guard and gendarmerie at Rheims, Soissons, and Chalons, were seized by the same spirit; pillage became universal; the corps disbanded, and wreaked their disappointment on their own officers, many of whom they put to death. Such was the general consternation, that the people of Paris began to despair of the republic, and hesitation became visible in the new levies who were daily forwarded from its gates to the frontier.[1]

Consternation in the rear of the French.

[1] Toul. ii. 322. Th. iii. 110. Dum. iii. 39. St Cyr, i. 74, 75. Introd.

The troops of Bournonville, which arrived first, were stationed at Sainte Cohiers. When those of Kellerman came up, Dumourier ordered them to encamp between Dampierre and Elise, behind the river Auve; and as an attack from the enemy was anticipated, to advance in that event to the heights of VALMY. Kellerman conceived the order to mean, that he should take post there from the first, and accordingly occupied the heights with all his artillery and baggage, and began to erect his tents. The confusion occasioned by their arrival attracted the attention of the Prussians, who had arrived on the opposite heights of La Lune, and led to an action, inconsiderable in itself, but most important in the consequences to which it led.[2]

[2] Dum. iii. 41.

The Duke of Brunswick, hearing of the departure of Dumourier from the camp at Grandpré, at length put his troops in motion, passed the now unguarded defiles of the Forest, and on the 18th crossed the Auve, and advanced between the French army and Paris. By this bold movement, he hoped to cut off the enemy from their resources, and compel them either to abandon the capital or surrender. In this

way the hostile armies were placed in the most singular position; the Prussians faced towards the Rhine, and had their back to Champagne, while Dumourier, with his rear at the forest of Argonne, faced towards the French capital.[1]

[1] Jom. ii. 124. Th. iii. 115. Toul. ii. 324.

Arrived on the heights of La Lune, on the morning of the 20th, in a thick haze, the Prussians, when the vapours cleared away, perceived the French opposite to them on the heights of Valmy. A cannonade immediately commenced: Dumourier, perceiving that it was too late to draw Kellerman back to the camp originally assigned to him, immediately detached nine battalions, and eight squadrons, under General Chazot, to his support, while General Steingel was placed, with sixteen battalions, on a height which commanded the position of Valmy on the right.[2]

Cannonade of Valmy. Sept. 28.

[2] Toul. ii. 330. Dum. iii. 41.

The Duke of Brunswick formed his army in three columns, and seemed disposed to commence an attack by the oblique method, the favourite mode at that time in the Prussian forces. An accidental explosion of some ammunition waggons, near the mill of Valmy, occasioned a momentary disorder in the French army, and if followed by a vigorous attack, would probably have led to a total defeat. But the powerful fire of the French artillery, and the energetic conduct of Kellerman, and the steady front exhibited by his troops, disconcerted the Prussians, and induced the duke to hesitate in engaging his troops in a general action. The affair terminated in a vigorous cannonade on both sides, and the superb columns of the Prussians were drawn off at night without having fired a shot. Kellerman bivouacked after the action, on the heights of Valmy, and the Prussians on those of La Lune,[3] barring the great

[3] Dum. iii. 44, 45. Jom. ii. 131. Toul. ii. 330, 331. Th. iii. 112, 113.

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road to Chalons, and still between Dumourier and Paris.

It is with an invading army as with an insurrection; an indecisive action is equivalent to a defeat. The affair of Valmy was merely a cannonade; the total loss on both sides did not exceed 800 men; the bulk of the forces on neither were drawn out; yet it produced upon the invaders consequences equivalent to the most terrible overthrow. The Duke of Brunswick no longer ventured to despise an enemy who had shown so much steadiness under a severe fire of artillery; the elevation of victory, the self-confidence which ensures it, had passed over to the other side. Gifted with an uncommon degree of intelligence, and influenced by an ardent imagination, the French soldiers are easily depressed by defeat, but proportionally raised by success; they rapidly make the transition from one state of feeling to the other. From the cannonade at Valmy may be dated the commencement of the career of victory which carried their armies to Vienna and the Kremlin.[1]

[1] Toul. ii. 334. Jom. ii. 131. Th. iii. 113. Dum. iii. 44. Hard. i. 478, 479.

After the action, Kellerman was withdrawn from the heights of Valmy to the ground originally assigned him in the intrenched camp, while the Prussians strengthened themselves in their position on the heights of La Lune, still covering the great road to Chalons and Paris. The Executive Council evinced great disquietude at the situation of the armies, and urged Dumourier to change his ground for such a position as might cover Chalons, Meaux, and Rheims, which were threatened by the enemy's light troops. He replied with the firmness of a great general that he would maintain his present position; and so far from detaching forces to cover Chalons,[2]

French retain their position.

[2] Jom. ii. 133. Dum. iii. 44, 47. Th. iii. 116, 117. Ann. Reg. xxxiii. 30.

he gave orders for the troops which were collecting there to advance nearer to the scene of action. The position of Islettes was still preserved; and an attack, by a detachment of the Allies, on that important pass was defeated by the obstinate resistance of the officer in command.

The conduct of the Duke of Brunswick, both in this action, and the movements for three weeks which had preceded it, would be altogether inexplicable, if the external aspect of the military events alone was considered. But the truth was, as has at length been revealed, that during all this period, a secret negotiation was in dependence between him and Dumourier, the object of which was to obtain, after a little delay, the recognition of the constitutional throne by the latter, and the junction of his army to the invading force. This negotiation was skilfully conducted by the French general, who constantly held out that he was in reality favourable to the King and the Constitution, and would show himself as such when the proper time arrived; but that in order to do so with effect, it was necessary to wait for the arrival of the other corps d'armée, as without an imposing force such a declaration would not be attended with the desired effect at Paris, and that any disaster in the mean time would put an end to all his designs. By these plausible but insidious communications, Dumourier gained time to retire from the Argonne forest to St Ménéhould without molestation, and completely paralysed his antagonist, till the arrival of the expected reinforcements put him in a situation to throw off the mask and openly resist the allied arms.[1]

[1] Hard. i. 471.

The same secret negotiation, which had already arrested their movements, restrained the Prussian

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arms on the field of Valmy; the Duke of Brunswick was fearful, by a decided action and probable victory, of converting a promised ally into a decided opponent.* No sooner was the cannonade concluded than the interchange of secret messengers became more active than ever. Lombard, private secretary to the duke, suffered himself to be made prisoner in disguise by the French patrols, and conducted the negotiation. The duke insisted on the immediate liberation of the King; and re-establishment of a constitutional monarchy; while the French general avowed that these were the objects which he really cherished at the bottom of his heart, but that, in order to carry these intentions into effect with any prospect of success, it was indispensable, in the first place, that the allies should retire and evacuate the French territory; that their doing so would give him so much influence that he had no doubt of being able to achieve these desirable objects, and that he pledged his word of honour to do so: but that if these terms were resisted, he would exert all the means in his power to destroy the invaders, which his present situation, at the head of a hundred thousand men, enabled him to effect without difficulty, and that the necessary effect of such a continuance of the contest would be the destruction of the King and the Royal Family, whose lives were already menaced by the anarchical faction who held the reins of power at Paris.[1]

[1] Hard. i. 486, 487.

These representations of Dumourier made a great impression at the allied headquarters. The danger

* This was openly alluded to in the Prussian official despatch, giving an account of the battle. "From the general to the lowest soldier the most enthusiastic spirit animated the army, and it would undoubtedly have gained a glorious victory, *if considerations of a still higher kind had not prevented the King from giving battle.*"—HARD. i. 482.

to the King's person was evident, from the violence of the Jacobins, and the frightful massacre in the prisons which had already taken place. The conduct of the Republicans, under the cannonade of Valmy, had demonstrated that their troops could at least stand fire, and were not disposed to join the invaders; circumstances which, in the most favourable view, presaged a severe and bloody contest before the war was brought to a successful issue. It seemed foreign to the interests of Prussia to risk its sovereign and the flower of its army by a farther advance into France, in pursuance of objects in which it had no immediate or peculiar interest, and which, if too warmly pursued, would probably divert the national forces from the side of Poland, where real acquisitions for the monarchy were to be obtained. These considerations were strongly urged upon the King by his council, and the Duke of Brunswick, who had not altogether lost hopes that brilliant prospects still awaited him from the triumph of the liberal party in France. But the King steadily resisted, and, inflamed by military ardour and a generous desire to save the august captives at Paris, strongly urged an immediate advance to the capital.[1]

[1] Hard. i. 486, 494.

The negotiation, however, still continued. The King of Prussia offered terms on which he was willing immediately to evacuate the French territory;* but, in answer, he received a bulletin, con-

* They were—

1. The King disclaims all intention to restore the ancient *régime*, but wishes only the establishment of such a constitution as may be for the advantage of the kingdom.

2. He insists that all propagandism should cease in his own dominions and those of his allies.

3. That the King should be set at liberty.

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taining the decree of the Assembly abolishing royalty in France, and converting the kingdom into a Republic. Filled with consternation at this intelligence, the Prussian envoys returned mournfully to their camp; and Dumourier artfully took advantage of the general alarm, to represent that he was as much distressed as any one at the turn affairs had taken at Paris; that the Republican party was now triumphant, and could be overthrown only by the restoration of calmer ideas on the return of peace; but that nothing could be more certain, than that any farther advance of the invaders would involve in instantaneous ruin the King, the royal family, and the whole nobility, and render utterly hopeless the restoration of legitimate authority.[1]

[1] Hard. i. 500, 501.

While skilfully making use of these painful and too probable considerations to paralyse the Allied armies, and cause them to waste the precious moments in fruitless negotiations, Dumourier apprized the Government at Paris of all that was going forward, and informed them, that he was satisfied that the distress was very great in their army, and that, by a little farther firmness on his part, they would be driven to a disastrous retreat.* At the same time,

* "The proposals of the King of Prussia," said he, "do not appear to offer a basis for a negotiation, but they demonstrate that their distress is very great, a fact sufficiently indicated by the wretchedness of their bread, the multitude of their sick, and the languor of their attacks. I am persuaded that the King of Prussia is now heartily sorry at being so far in advance, and would readily adopt any means of extricating himself from his embarrassment. He keeps so near me, from the wish to engage us in a combat as the only means he has of escaping; for if I keep within my intrenchments for eight days longer, his army will dissolve of itself from want of provisions. I will undertake no serious negotiation without your authority, and without receiving from you the basis on which it is to be conducted. All that I have hitherto done with M. Manstein is to gain time, and commits no one."—*Secret Despatch, Dumourier to the French Government, 24th September.*—HARD. i. 500.

he wrote a long memorial to the King of Prussia, in which he adduced every argument calculated to shake his resolution to advance farther, and insisted, in an especial manner, on the danger to which it would expose the King of France.[1]

[1] Hard i. 499, 509.

Frederick William, however, remained firm; neither the strong representations of his generals, as to the danger of his army, nor the still more pressing perils of the King of France, could shake his resolution. At a council of war, held at headquarters on the 27th of September, at which the ministers of Austria and Russia assisted, it was resolved to advance, and give battle on the 29th. But before this resolution could be carried into execution, intelligence was received, which gave the numerous party in the Prussian Cabinet, who longed for peace, the ascendant. A decree of the Committee of Public Safety was brought to headquarters, in which it had been unanimously resolved to enter into no negotiation until the Prussian troops had entirely evacuated the French territory. Advices at the same time arrived from London and the Hague, containing the refusal of the Cabinet of St James and the States General to join the coalition. The generals redoubled their representations on the disastrous state of the army; and the Countess Lichtenau, the King's mistress, yielding to a large bribe from the French Government, employed her too powerful influence for the same object.[2] Assailed at once in so many different quarters, and overcome by the representations of his generals as to the necessity of the measure, the King at length yielded; and on the 29th the orders given for battle were revoked, and a retreat resolved on. It was agreed between the generals of the two armies, that the Prussians, on condition of evacuating

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[2] Hard. vii. 245.

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the fortresses, of which they had made themselves masters, should not be disquieted in their rear; and Dumourier, delighted at being relieved by his skill and firmness from the overwhelming dangers with which he had been surrounded, wrote to the Convention:—"The Republic owes its salvation to the retreat of the Prussians. Had I not resolved to resist the universal opinion of all around me, the enemy was saved, and France in danger."[1]

[1] Secret Despatch, Oct. 1, 1792. Hard. ii. 2.

In coming to this determination, the Prussian Cabinet were governed, not less by the old standing jealousy of Austria, which at that period so strongly influenced both their councils and the feelings of the people, than the prospect of dangers from a farther advance. The King, in entering upon the campaign, had contemplated only a rapid march to Paris; but the protraction of the war, and increasing resistance of the French, rendered it evident that that object could not easily be accomplished, and that its prosecution would seriously endanger the long hoped for Polish acquisitions, while the dethronement and captivity of Louis exposed him to imminent hazard, if the army continued its advance towards the capital.[1]

[1] St Cyr, i. 80, 81. Jom. ii. 133, 137. Th. iii. 120. Dum. iii. 20.

The event soon justified the confidence of the French general. Dumourier was at the head of sixty thousand men, even after all the losses of the campaign, including twelve thousand horse; his artillery was numerous, and his position excellent, while large detachments were rapidly forming at Chalons, Rheims, Soissons, Epenay, and all the towns in the interior. His troops, though somewhat affected by the severity of the weather, were upon the whole in good health and condition; and sufficient supplies arrived for the camp from Sedan and Metz, which still remained in the power of the French. On the other

Distress of the Allies. They resolve to retreat.

hand, the condition of the Allied army was daily becoming more critical. Their convoys, harassed by the garrisons of Sedan, and Montmedy, and drawn from the remote provinces of Luxemburg and Treves, by the pass of Grandpré, arrived very irregularly; the soldiers had been already four days without rations, and subsisted on corn steeped in unwholesome water. The plains of Champagne were sterile, destitute alike of water, forage, and provisions. The rains had set in with more than usual severity, and the troops, bivouacked on the open plain, were severely affected with dysenteries, and other contagious maladies, which had already cut off one-third from the effective strength of the army. In these circumstances, to advance farther into the enemy's territory, would have been an act of the highest temerity, and might have endangered the safety of the King of Prussia, as well as his whole forces. An attack on the French intrenched camp was of doubtful success; failure in such an enterprise certain ruin. The only rational plan was to retire into the fertile district of the three bishoprics, form the siege of Montmedy, and take up their quarters in Lorraine for the winter, retaining as their advanced posts the defiles in the Argonne forest, which they had acquired. But this project was inconsistent with the secret convention which had been adopted, and therefore a retreat to the Rhine was resolved on.

Consternation at Paris from the retreat to St Ménéhould.

But while these perplexities were accumulating on the Allied forces, it was with the utmost difficulty that Dumourier was able to maintain his position against the reiterated orders of the Convention, and the representations of the officers in his own camp. The French Government were in the greatest alarm at finding no regular force between them and the

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Allies; and the detached corps of the enemy, who spread as far as Rheims, diffused a general consternation over the whole country. Courier after courier was despatched to the general, with orders to quit his position, and draw nearer to the capital; and in these representations Kellerman, and the other officers of the army, warmly joined. The great concentration of forces soon occasioned a want of provisions in the camp; the soldiers were at last two or three days without bread; and attempts at mutiny were already beginning, especially in the battalions of Fédérés, recently arrived from Paris. Even the superior officers began to be impressed with the necessity of retreating; and Kellerman urged such a movement with so much earnestness, that the general was obliged to promise, like Columbus, that if the object of his wishes was not attained in a given number of days, he would retire. But the firmness of Dumourier triumphed over every obstacle; and by impressing upon his soldiers the truth, that whichever of the parties could fast longest would prove victorious, inspired them with resolution to surmount all their privations.[1]

[1] Dum. iii. 54, 60. Th. iii. 116.

Conferences opened for the retreat of the Prussians.

An armistice of the limited sort above mentioned, which stipulated only that the allies should not be molested in their rear during their retreat, and left the French at perfect liberty to harass the flanks of the invading army, was instantly taken advantage of by Dumourier. On the same day on which it was concluded, he detached several corps, which forced back the most advanced parties of the enemy, which had spread such dismay through the interior, and gradually pressing round their flanks, at length hemmed in their rear, cut off their detachments, and intercepted their convoys. Experience

seldom teaches wisdom; an error of precisely the same nature was committed by Napoleon, with still more disastrous consequences, in the armistice between Murat and Kutusoff, near Moscow, in the Russian campaign.[1]

[1] Dum. iii. 63, 65. Jom. ii. 138.

On the 30th September the Allies commenced their retreat, and repassed the defiles of the Argonne forest without molestation on the 2d and 3d October. Kellerman in vain urged the commander to adopt more vigorous measures to harass their march, and strongly recommended the immediate detachment of a large body upon Clermont. In consequence of the secret understanding with the enemy, and of a distrust of his own troops in field movements in presence of so disciplined a force as the Prussians, Dumourier allowed them to retreat in perfect tranquillity, and in the most leisurely manner. On the first day they retired only three miles, and without abandoning any of their equipage; and it was not till the defile of Grandpré was passed, and the Prussians were fifteen leagues in advance, that Kellerman was detached in pursuit. The Allies withdrew in the finest order, and in the most pacific manner, though dreadfully weakened by disease.[2]

Sept. 30. Allies retreat.

[2] Jom. ii. 138, 139. Th. iii. 122. Toul. ii. 345, 349.

Relieved by the retreat of the Prussians from the pressing danger which had obliged him to concentrate his forces, Dumourier conceived himself at liberty to resume his favourite project of an invasion of Flanders. Leaving, therefore, Kellerman with forty thousand men to follow the retiring columns, he sent thirty thousand to the army of the North, under Bournonville, and he himself repaired to Paris. The force with which the Prussians retired was about seventy thousand men, and their retreat was conducted throughout in the most imposing manner, taking

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position and facing about on occasion of every halt. It was impossible, consequently, for Kellerman, with his inconsiderable force, to make any impression on the retiring mass; and the French generals, satisfied with saving the Republic, appear to have been rather disposed to make a bridge of gold for a flying enemy. In virtue of an express or implied understanding, no molestation was offered to the invaders in their retreat. Verdun and Longwy were successively abandoned. In the end of October the Allies evacuated France, and the troops of Kellerman went into cantonments between the fortress of Longwy and the Moselle.[1]

[1] Toul. ii. 351, 356. Jom. ii. 141, 142. Th. iii. 160.

On getting possession of the ceded fortresses, the commissaries of the Convention took a bloody revenge on the royalist party. Several young women, who had presented garlands of flowers to the King of Prussia during the advance of the army, were sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal, and condemned to death. The Prussians left behind them, on their route, the most melancholy proofs of the disasters of the campaign: all the villages were filled with the dead and dying; without any considerable fighting, the Allies had lost, by dysentery and fevers, more than a fourth of their numbers.[2]

[2] Toul. ii. 357. Jom. ii. 142.

Operations in Flanders. Siege of Lisle.

While these decisive events were taking place in the central provinces, operations of minor importance, but yet material to the issue of the campaign, were going on on the two flanks in Alsace and in the Low Countries. The principal forces of both parties having been drawn from the Netherlands to strengthen the armies of the centre, the movements there were necessarily inconsiderable. The French camp at Maulde was broken up, and a retreat commenced to the camp at Bruillé, a strong position somewhat in the rear. But in executing this movement, the re-

treating force was, on September 14, attacked and completely routed by the Austrians, with the loss of all their artillery, equipage, and ammunition. Encouraged by this easy success, the invaders, under the Archduke Albert, with a force of twenty-five thousand, undertook the siege of Lisle, one of the strongest towns in Europe, and which, in 1708, had made a glorious defence against the united armies of Eugene and Marlborough. The garrison, consisting of ten thousand men, and the commander, a man of courage and energy, were devoted to the cause of the republic. In these circumstances, little success could be hoped for from a regular siege; but the Austrians endeavoured Sept. 29. to intimidate the governor by the terror of a bombardment, which was continued night and day for a whole week. This terrible tempest produced little impression upon the soldiers, who, secure within bomb-proof casements, beheld it fall with indifference upon the defenceless inhabitants; but upon the people in the vicinity it produced such extreme consternation, that it was afterwards ascertained that had Lisle been taken, almost all the other frontier towns would have at once capitulated, to avoid a similar fate. The Austrians, in fact, would have acquired, by the capture of this important city, a firm footing within the French frontier, attended by the most important effect upon the future issue of the campaign. But their operations were interrupted by the retreat of the Duke of Brunswick, and the approach of considerable forces from various quarters to raise the siege. The inhabitants bore with heroic firmness the terrors of a bombardment, which was continued with unprecedented vigour on the part of the enemy, and consumed a considerable portion of the city; and during the siege General Lamartiliere effected his entry with above ten thousand men, so that the besieged

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became equal to the besieging force. This circumstance, joined to the exhaustion of their ammunition, and the approach of a body detached by Dumourier to threaten their operations, induced the Austrians to abandon their enterprise; and on the 7th October the siege was raised, and the troops withdrawn from the French territory. The terrors of the conflagration, and the glorious issue of the siege, were celebrated throughout all France, and contributed not a little to augment that energetic spirit which now animated the inhabitants even of the most distant departments, and soon became so formidable to the neighbouring states.[1]

Siege raised, Oct. 7.

[1] Jom. ii. 170, 175, 176. Th. iii. 181. Ann. Reg. 1793, 55, 56.

Mean while, General Biron, who commanded in Alsace forty-five thousand men, consumed the most important period of the campaign in tardy preparations. But at length General Custine, who was at the head of a force of seventeen thousand men, posted near Landau, undertook an offensive movement against Spire, where immense magazines had been collected. By a rapid advance, he surrounded a corps of three thousand men, who were stationed near that city, and compelled them to surrender, an event which led to the immediate capture of Spire, Worms, and Frankenthal. This important success, which took place at the very time that the main body of the Allies was engaged in the Argonne forest, might have had the most important effect upon the future fate of the campaign, had Custine immediately obeyed the orders of the Convention, and relinquishing his invasion of the Palatinate, turned with his victorious forces on the rear and communications of the Duke of Brunswick's army. But that general had other projects in view, which ultimately turned out not a little serviceable to the Republic. Disobeying the orders of government, he

Operations on the Upper Rhine.

Sept. 30.

Capture of Mayence, Oct. 21.

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remained fourteen days in apparent inactivity in the Palatinate, but in reality carrying on a secret correspondence with the garrison and Jacobin Club in Mentz. In consequence, on the 18th October, he moved; at the head of twenty-two thousand men, towards that city, which was invested on the 19th, and on the 21st, before a single battery had been raised, that important fortress, the key to the western provinces of the empire, surrendered by capitulation, the garrison of 4000 men being allowed to retire, on the condition of not serving against the French for twelve months. Thus did the Allies lose the only fortified post which they possessed on the Rhine, a signal proof of the rashness and presumption with which they had penetrated into the heart of France, without securing in an adequate manner their means of retreat.[1]

[1] Jom. ii. 148, 151, 157, 158. Th. iii. 182. Ann. Reg. 1793, 70, 71. Hard. ii. 41, 61.

Stimulated by his desire of plunder, Custine made an useless incursion to Frankfort, which was of no real service to the campaign; while the Duke of Brunswick, terrified at the loss of Mentz, advanced by forced marches from the neighbourhood of Luxembourg to Coblentz, where his forces defiled over the Rhine by a flying bridge for twelve successive days. The corps of the emigrant noblesse was immediately dissolved, from want of any resources to keep it together; the Austrians, under Clairfait, were recalled to the defence of the Low Countries; and the Prussians put into cantonments on the right bank of the Rhine. Thus was completed the dissolution of that splendid army, which a few months before had entered France with such brilliant prospects, and by which, if properly directed, might have been achieved the deliverance of Europe from the scourge of democratic ambition. What oceans of blood required to be shed, how many provinces laid

Oct. 25.

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waste, how many cities destroyed, before the vantage-ground could be regained, before the plains of Champagne again beheld a victorious enemy, or a righteous retribution was taken for the sins of the conquering republic![1]

[1] Jom. ii. 160, 161. St Cyr, 1, 8, 9. Th. iii. 185, 186. Hard. ii. 61, 73.

The final retreat of the Allies left Dumourier at liberty to carry into execution a project he had long meditated, that of invading the Low Countries, and rescuing those fine provinces from the Austrian dominion. The advantages of this design were evident; to advance the frontiers of the Republic to the Rhine, to draw from the conquered provinces the means of carrying on the war, to stir up the germ of revolution in Flanders, reinforce the armies by the discontented spirits in that populous country, and extinguish the English influence in Holland, were objects worthy of the conqueror of Brunswick. He received unlimited powers from the government, and the losses sustained by the Allies during their invasion, gave him a great superiority of force. The right wing, composed of a large portion of the troops detached from the Argonne forest, consisted of 16,000 men; between that and the centre was placed General Harville with 14,000. Dumourier himself commanded the main body, consisting of forty thousand men, while the left wing, under Labourdonaye, was about 30,000 strong—in all 100,000 men, all animated by the highest spirits, and anticipating nothing but triumph and conquest, from their recent success over the Prussian invaders.[2]

Plan for the invasion of Flanders.

[2] Compare Jom. ii. 215. Toul. iii. 38, 39. Th. ii. 210, 211. An. Reg. 1793. 59. Dum. iii. 121. Oct. 26.

To oppose this immense army, the Austrians had no adequate force at command. Their whole troops, including the corps which General Clairfait had brought from the Duke of Brunswick's army, did not exceed forty thousand men, and were scattered over too extended a line. The centre, under the command of

the Archduke Albert, was stationed in front of the important city of Mons; while the remainder of the army, scattered over a front of nearly thirty miles, could render little assistance, in case of need, to the main body.[1]

[1] Toul. iii. 40. Ann. Reg. 1793, 61.

This main body, not above eighteen thousand men, was intrenched on a strong position near the village of JEMAPPES. The field of battle had been long before chosen by the Imperialists, and extended through the villages of Ausmes and Jemappes, to the heights of Berthaimont on the one hand, and the village of Sifly on the other, over a succession of eminences which commanded all the adjacent plain. Fourteen redoubts, strengthened by all the resources of art, and armed by nearly a hundred pieces of artillery, seemed almost to compensate to the Austrians for their great inferiority of number. The French artillery, however, was nearly equal to that of their opponents, and their forces greatly superior, amounting to no less than forty thousand men; and though many of these troops were inexperienced, recent triumphs had in an extraordinary degree elevated their courage. In this action, the new system of tactics was tried with signal success, viz. that of accumulating masses upon one point, and in this manner forcing some weak part of the position, and compelling the whole to be abandoned.[2]

French invasion of Flanders.

[2] Jom. ii. 217. Dum. iii. 165. 169. Toul. iii. 45. Ann. Reg. 1793, 61, 62. Hard. ii. 45, 47

On the 6th November, the battle commenced at daybreak. The French troops, who had been under arms or in bivouac for three successive days, received the order to advance with shouts of joy, moved forward with rapidity, and lost few men in traversing the plain which separated them from the enemy. The attack was commenced by General Bournonville on the village of Cuesmes; a severe fire of artillery for some hours arrested his efforts,

Battle of Jemappes, Nov. 6.

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but at length the flank of the village of Jemappes was turned, and the redoubts on the left of the Austrian position were carried by the impetuous attack of the French columns. Dumourier seized this moment to make his centre advance against the front of Jemappes; the column moved forward rapidly and with little loss; but, on approaching the village, they were attacked in flank by some squadrons of horse which pierced the column, and drove back a portion of the French cavalry which supported it. The moment was in the last degree critical, for at the same instant, the leading battalions, checked by a tremendous fire of grape-shot, were beginning to waver at the foot of the redoubts. In this extremity, the heroism of a brave valet of Dumourier's, named Baptiste, who rallied the broken troops, arrested the victorious squadrons of the Austrians, while the intrepidity and conduct of a young general restored the front of the line. Quickly forming the broken regiments into one column, which he called the column of Jemappes, he placed himself at its head, and renewed the attack on the redoubts with so much vigour, that the village was carried, and the Austrians were at length driven from their intrenchments in the centre of the field. This young officer was the Duke de Chartres, afterwards LOUIS PHILIPPE, King of the French.[1]

[1] Dum. iii. 169, 173. Toul. iii. 49. Ann. Reg. 1793, 62. Th. iii. 241, 245.

While the battle was contested with so much obstinacy in the centre, Dumourier had an equal cause for anxiety on the right. Bournonville, though at first successful on that side, had paused when he beheld the confusion of the central division; and his movements vacillated between a desire to maintain the ground he had won, and draw back his forces to support the column which seemed in such confusion in the plain. This vacillation was soon perceived by the enemy; the fire of the French artillery could

hardly equal that of five redoubts which played upon their ranks, and a large body of Imperial cavalry was in front, ready to charge on the first appearance of disorder. Dumourier flew to the spot; rode along the front of two brigades of his old soldiers from the camp at Maulde, who rent the air with cries of *Vive Dumourier*, and succeeded in rallying the squadrons of horse, who were beginning to fall into confusion. The Imperial cavalry charged immediately after, but, being received by a volley within pistol-shot by the infantry, turned about in confusion; and the French dragoons being immediately detached in pursuit, the Imperialist horse were irretrievably routed, and fled in confusion to Mons. Animated by this success, Dumourier made the victorious brigades chant the Marseilloise Hymn, and, taking advantage of their enthusiasm, rushed forward at their head, and entered the redoubts by the gorge. Being still uneasy about his centre, however, he set off, at the head of six squadrons of cavalry, to reinforce the Duke de Chartres; but he had not proceeded above a few hundred paces, when he met his aide-de-camp, the young Duke de Montpensier, with the joyful intelligence that the battle was there already won, and that the Austrians were retiring on all points to Mons.[1]

[1] Dum. iii. 173, 175. Toul. iii. 49. Th. iii. 242, 246. Ann. Reg. 1793, 62, 63. Hard. ii. 45, 47.

Such was the famous battle of Jemappes; the first pitched battle which had been gained by the Republican armies, and on that account both celebrated at the time, and important in its consequences, beyond the real merits of the contest. The Austrian loss amounted to 5000 men; they withdrew all their artillery, except fourteen pieces, and retired in good order to Mons. The French lost above 6000 men; but the consequences of the victory on the spirits and moral strength of the two parties were incalculable,[2]

[2] Ann. Reg. 1793, 63. Toul. iii. 50, 51. Th. iii. 246.

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and in fact led to the immediate conquest of the whole Netherlands.

These great results, however, were rather owing to the terrors of the Imperialists, than the vigorous measures of the French general. On the 7th, he entered Mons, which opened its gates without resistance, and there remained in perfect inactivity for five days. Mean while, the Austrian authorities took to flight in the rear, and, abandoning Brussels, sought refuge in Ruremonde. The French, in the course of their advance, were every where received with enthusiasm; Ath, Tournay, Newport, Ostend, and Bruges, opened their gates, and, after a slight skirmish with the rear-guard, Brussels itself was occupied by their victorious troops. On the right, General Valence captured Charleroi, and advanced to Namur; while on the left, Labourdonaye, after much hesitation, moved forward to Ghent and Antwerp. Before the end of November, the Imperialists retained nothing of their possessions in the Low Countries, but the citadels of that important city and Namur.[1]

Tardy advancement of Dumourier. Conquest of Flanders.

Nov. 8 to 12.

Nov. 14.

[1] Toul. iii. 51, 52. Jom. ii. 236, 239, 243.

The magnitude of these successes excited the jealousy of the Republican party at Paris. On the very day of the cannonade at Valmy, the Republic had been proclaimed, and Royalty abolished, over France. The rapid conquests of the young general awakened the alarms of the Republican despots; another Cæsar, a second Cromwell were denounced; Marat, in his sanguinary journal, and Robespierre, from the tribune, proclaimed him as threatening the liberty of the people. If the event in some degree justified their predictions, it must be conceded that they occasioned it, by showing him what fate he had to expect, if the chance of war, by exposing him to any considerable reverse, should place his head in their hands.[2]

Jealousy of Dumourier at Paris.

[2] Toul. iii. 52, 53. Jom. ii. 255. Th. iii. 263.

While these jealousies were forming at the seat of power, the career of conquest brought Dumourier to the Scheldt, where events productive of the most important consequences took place. The Executive Council, by a decree on November 16, commanded him to open that river to the Flemish vessels, an event which could not fail to produce a rupture with the maritime powers. He, in consequence, directed a considerable body of forces to that quarter; and Labourdonaye, after having made himself master of Malines, and a large depôt of military stores which were placed in that city, advanced towards Antwerp. He was there superseded by Dumourier, in consequence of suspicions of his fidelity to the Republican government, and the command given to Miranda, an officer of zeal and talent, who afterwards became celebrated for his attempts to restore the independence of South America. On November 30, the citadel of that important city capitulated to the new commander, and the French became undisputed masters of the Scheldt.[1]

French advance to the Scheldt. Fall of Antwerp.

Nov. 30.

[1] Jom. ii. 247. Pièces Just. ii. No. 6. Th. iii. 266.

The Republican general lost no time in carrying into effect the favourite French project of opening that great artery of Flemish prosperity. He immediately wrote to Miranda:—"Lose not a moment in despatching a flat-bottomed boat down the Scheldt, to ascertain whether the navigation is really impeded, or if it is merely a report spread by the Dutch. Do every thing in your power to open the stream to commercial enterprise, that the Flemings, contrasting the generosity of the Republic with the avarice of the Austrian government, who sold the navigation of the Scheldt to the Dutch for 7,000,000 florins, may be induced to adopt the genuine principles of freedom."[2] Miranda lost no time in taking measures for carrying this design into execution; and in a few

[2] Jom. ii. 248.

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days, the flotilla, moored at the mouth of the river, ascended to Antwerp, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants, who beheld in this auspicious event the dawn of a brighter era of commercial enterprise than had ever opened upon their city since the rise of the Dutch Republic.[1]

Dec. 7.

[1] Jom. ii. 249.

French capture Liege.

While the left wing of the army was prosecuting these successes, the centre, under Dumourier himself, was also following the career of conquest. A strong rearguard of the main body of the Austrians, posted near Roucoux, was attacked on the 26th, and, after an obstinate engagement, the Imperialists retired, and the next morning Liege opened its gates to the victors. The revolutionary party immediately proceeded to measures of extreme violence in that city; a Jacobin club was formed, which speedily rivalled in energy and atrocity the parent institution in Paris; while the democratic party divided into opposite factions, on the formation of an independent republic, or a junction with France. Danton and Lacroix, the commissioners of the Convention, strongly supported the latter party, who speedily broke out into every species of violence.[2]

Dec. 27.

[2] Ann. Reg. 1793, 66. Th. iii. 266.

Right wing reduces Namur.

At the same time, the right wing, under Valence, pressed the siege of the citadel of Namur. The Austrians, who had established themselves in the vicinity to annoy the besiegers, were first dislodged, and the trenches being shortly after opened, the fort of Vilette, a strong work which impeded the operations of the besiegers, was carried by assault on the 30th November. The citadel in consequence surrendered a few days after, and the garrison, consisting of above 2000 men, were made prisoners of war. About the same time, Miranda dispossessed the Austrian government from Ruremonde, and took possession of that city, while, on the other side, Dumourier,[3] after dislodging

Dec. 2.

Dec. 6.

[3] Ann. Reg. 1793, 67. Th. iii. 266. Jom. ii. 249. Toul. iii. 252, 253.

them from their position, covering Aix-la-Chapelle, made himself master of it also.

Dumourier now projected an irruption into the Dutch territory, and the siege of Maestricht, one of the principal frontier fortresses belonging to that republic. But the Executive Council, justly apprehensive of engaging at once in a war with the United Provinces and Great Britain, which was bound by treaty to support them, commanded him to desist from the enterprise; and his force being now much weakened by sickness, want, fatigue, and the desertion of above ten thousand men, who had left their colours during the military license which followed the conquest of Belgium, and the loss of six thousand horses, he resolved to put his troops into winter quarters. His army, accordingly, was put into cantonments, in a line from Namur, by Aix-la-Chapelle, to Ruremonde. The Government urged him to continue his offensive operations, and to drive the Imperialists beyond the Rhine; but the exhausted state of his soldiers rendered any farther movements impracticable, and, yielding to his urgent representations, they at length consented to their enjoying some weeks of repose.[1]

Dumourier puts his army into winter quarters.

[1] Jom. ii. 250, 258, 259, 260. Th. iii. 267. Ann. Reg. 1793, 69. Dum. iii. 230, 233. Dec. 12.

Flanders was not long of reaping the bitter fruits of republican conquest. On the 19th November, the Convention, inflamed by the victory of Jemappes, published the famous Resolution, in which they declared, "that they would grant fraternity and succour to every people who were disposed to recover their liberty; and that they charged their generals to give aid to all such people, and to defend all citizens who had been, or might be, disquieted in the cause of freedom." This decree, which was equivalent to a declaration of war against every established government, was ordered to be translated, and published in

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all languages. And it was followed up, on December 15, by another decree, calculated in an especial manner to injure the subjects of the conquered provinces. By this celebrated manifesto, the Republic proclaimed, in all the countries which it conquered, "the sovereignty of the people, the suppression of all the constituted authorities, of all subsisting taxes and imposts, of all feudal and territorial rights, of all the privileges of nobility, and exclusive privileges of every description. It announced to all their subjects, liberty, fraternity, and equality, invited them to form themselves forthwith into primary assemblies, to elect an administration and provisional government, and declared that it would treat as enemies all persons who, refusing these benefits, or renouncing them, should show any disposition to preserve, recall, or treat with their prince, or any of the privileged castes."[1]

Decree of the Convention against all Governments.

[1] Jom. ii. 264, 265. Pièces Just. No. 8, 9.

This last decree excited as violent indignation in Belgium as the first had awakened alarm through all Europe. The Flemings were by no means disposed to abandon their ancient chiefs; and the feudal feelings, which existed in great force in that country, were revolted at the sudden severing of all the ties which had hitherto been held most sacred. The dearest interests, the strongest attachments of nature were violated, when the whole ancient aristocracy of the land was uprooted, and a foundation laid for the formation of a new set of governors, drawn from the universal suffrage of the inhabitants; property of every kind, institutions of whatever duration, were threatened by so violent a shock to the fabric of society. These feelings, natural on so extreme a change in any country, were in a peculiar manner roused in Flanders, in consequence of the powerful influence of the clergy over its inhabitants, and the vast number

Violent changes introduced into Belgium.

of established interests and great properties which were threatened by the sweeping changes of the French Convention; nor was the exasperation diminished by the speeches of the orators who introduced the measure; Cambon, who moved the resolution, having spoken of the Low Countries as a conquered province; and Brissot, who seconded it, warned the Belgians to adopt it, under pain of being "put to the ban of French philosophy."[1]

[1] Jom. ii. 265. Th. iii. 268.

Immediately after issuing the decree, Flanders was inundated by a host of revolutionary agents, who, with liberty, patriotism, and protection in their mouths, had nothing but violence, confiscation, and bloodshed in their measures. Forced requisitions of men, horses, and provisions, enormous contributions levied by military execution, compulsory payment in the depreciated assignats of France, general spoliation of the churches, were among the first effects of the democratic government. The legions of fiscal agents and tax-gatherers who overspread the land, appeared actuated by no other motive but to wring their uttermost farthing out of the wretched inhabitants, and make their own fortunes out of a transient possession of the conquered districts. At their head were Danton, Lacroix, and Carrier, republicans of the sternest cast and the most rapacious disposition, who infused their own infernal energy into all inferior agents, and gave to the inhabitants of Flanders a foretaste of the Reign of Terror.[2]

[2] Dum. iii. 277, 278. Jom. ii. 265.

Five-and-thirty commissioners, really chosen by the Jacobin Club in Paris, though nominally by the Convention, supported these three master spirits in the work of destruction. They were sent to Flanders nominally to organize the march of freedom—really to plunder the whole aristocratic party. Immediately

Severe oppression on Flanders.

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on their arrival they divided that unhappy country into districts, and each in his little domain proceeded to the work of spoliation. The peasants were driven by strokes of the sabre, and at the point of the bayonet, to the primary assemblies which had been designated by the Convention, while the churches and chateaux were plundered, movables of every description sold, and the proceeds paid over to the French commissioners. The estates of the clergy were every where put under sequestration, while valuable property of every description, belonging to lay proprietors, was seized and sold; and the unhappy owners, under the odious title of Aristocrats, too often sent off, with their wives and children, to the fortresses of France, there to remain as hostages for farther requisitions.[1]

[1] Dum. iii. 278.

The inhabitants of Flanders, awakened by these terrible calamities from the dream of liberty, speedily became as ardent for the restoration of their former government, as they had ever been for its overthrow. The provinces of Brabant and Flanders, which had made such efforts to throw off the yoke of Joseph II., having tasted the consequences of Republican conquest, made the utmost efforts to rescue themselves from their liberators. A deputation was sent to the Emperor, imploring him to come to their deliverance, promising the aid of thirty thousand men, and large advances of money, in case of assistance.[2] Such were the first fruits of Republican conquest in Europe; but they were not the last. The words of freedom are seductive to all; its evils are known only to the actual sufferers. Europe required to suffer the evils under which Flanders groaned, before the ruinous illusion, which had led to its subjugation, was dispelled.

[2] Jom. ii. 266.

While these great changes were passing in the

North, events of minor importance, but still productive of important consequences, occurred on the Southern and Eastern frontier. The mountains of Savoy were the theatre of less sanguinary struggles between the Republican troops and the Italian soldiers. The evident peril of the Piedmontese dominions, from their close proximity to the great centre of revolutionary action, had led, early in 1792, to measures of precaution by the Sardinian Government; and all the states of Italy, alarmed at the rapid progress of democratical principles, had made advances towards a league for their mutual support. The ferment in Piedmont was so strong, and the contagion of liberal principles so violent, that nothing but war, it soon became evident, could save the kingdom from revolt. Matters were brought to a crisis in September 1792, by the rapid advance of the Imperialists through the Tyrol into the Milanese states. The French despatched an embassy to propose an alliance with the Piedmontese government, promising in that case to guarantee their dominions, repress the turbulence of their subjects, and cede to that power all the conquests made by their joint forces to the South of the Alps. But the peril of any conjunction with the Republican troops to any established government was so evident, that the King of Sardinia rejected the proposals. The French envoy, in consequence, was not permitted to proceed farther than Alexandria; and the Convention, immediately on receiving intelligence of that decisive step, declared war against the Piedmontese monarch, and immediate orders were despatched to General Montesquieu to assail Savoy, where the Jacobin emissaries had already sown the seeds of disaffection to the Italian dynasty.[1]

War declared against Piedmont, Sept. 15.

Sept. 15, 1792.

[1] Botta, i. 75, 88. Jom. ii. 180.

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On the 21st of September, the Republicans unexpectedly entered Savoy, and after a feeble resistance, took possession of Chambery and Montmelian, and shortly after overran the whole valleys as far as the foot of Mont Cenis. The Sardinian forces, though nearly 10,000 strong, were so dispersed that it was impossible to unite them in sufficient numbers to oppose any resistance to the sudden attack of the Republicans; another proof, in addition to the many on record, of the extreme difficulty of defending a range of mountains against a superior and enterprising enemy. Shortly after, operations on a still more extensive scale were undertaken against the country of Nice. On the 1st October, General Anselme crossed the Var at the head of nine thousand men, and on the same day, the French fleet, consisting of twelve ships of the line and frigates, cast anchor within half cannon-shot of the walls of Nice. Terrified at such superior forces, General Courten, who had not two thousand men at his command, and was menaced by an insurgent population within the town, precipitately retreated towards Saorgio and the Col di Tende, leaving the whole coast and valleys, to the foot of the great chain of the Maritime Alps, in the possession of the French. Montalban and Villa Franca, the first of which had so gloriously resisted the Prince of Conti in 1744, surrendered at the first summons, and Saorgio became the frontier post of the Piedmontese possessions.[1]

Sept. 21. French enter Savoy.

[1] Jom. ii. 190, 198. Ann Reg. 1793, 74. Bot. i. 95.

The Republicans made a cruel use of their victory. The inhabitants of Nice and the neighbouring country were rewarded for the friendly reception they had given them, by plunder, massacre, and outrages of every description. The mountaineers in the remotest valleys were hunted out, their cattle seized, their houses

burned, and their women violated, by those whom they had hailed as deliverers. A proclamation, issued by General Anselme against these excesses, met with no sort of attention; and the commissioners appointed by the Convention to enquire into the disorders, were unable to make any effectual reparation. Shortly after, an expedition was undertaken against the little fortress of Oneglia by the combined forces of land and sea; and the inhabitants having fired on a boat which approached the batteries with a flag of truce, and killed the officer who bore it, a sanguinary retribution for this violation of the usages of war was taken by the total destruction of the town.[1]

[1] Jom. ii. 200, 203, 205. Botta, i. 92, 96. Ann. Reg. 1793, 74.

Thus, in the space of a few weeks, were the countries of Nice and Savoy torn from the Sardinian crown, though defended by considerable armies, intersected with rugged and impassable mountains, and studded with fortresses once deemed impregnable. The sudden prostration of all these means of defence before the first attack of the Republicans, gave rise to the most painful reflections. It demonstrated the inefficient state of the Piedmontese troops, once so celebrated, and gave a sad presage of the probable result of an attack on Italy, when its best defenders had given such disgraceful proofs of pusillanimity. Nor was the general consternation diminished by the appearance of the exiles from France, who soon after arrived in the most lamentable condition at Geneva and Turin; a melancholy example of a sudden transition from the highest rank and prosperity, to the most abject state of misery.[2]

[2] Botta, i. 97, 98.

French invade Switzerland.

Having thus carried the Republican arms to the foot of the great central ridge which separates France from Italy, the Convention proceeded to extend their conquests to the republics of Switzerland. The

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cantons of that confederacy were much divided in opinion, some having resented with vehemence the massacre of the Swiss Guard on 10th August, and others being tinged by democratical principles, and ready to receive the Republican soldiers as deliverers from the prevailing power of the aristocracy. The Pays de Vaud, in particular, was in such a state of fermentation, that some severe examples had been found necessary by the government to maintain their authority. Paralysed by these intestine divisions, the Helvetic Confederacy had resolved to maintain an armed neutrality; but the grasping views of the Republican conquerors deprived them of such an advantage, and brought them at last into the general field of European warfare.[1]

[1] Jom. ii. 306, 310. Th. iii. 190, 191.

Clavieres, minister of foreign affairs in France, and a Genevese by birth, espoused warmly the part of the malecontents in his native city. He was eager to turn his newly-acquired power to the ruin of the faction, with which he had long contended in that diminutive republic. He directed Servan, the minister at war, to write to General Montesquieu, "that it would be well to break the fetters which despotism had forged to bind the Genevese, if they were inclined to publish the Rights of Man." That general was extremely unwilling to commence this new aggression, not only because the Diet had given him the strongest assurances of their resolution to maintain a strict neutrality, but because the canton of Berne had assembled a force of nearly ten thousand men to enforce its observation; and it was foreseen, that an attack on Geneva would be held as a declaration of war against the whole confederacy. Undeterred by these prudential considerations, the French Government commanded Montesquieu immediately to advance, while

on their side, the Swiss sent 1800 men to aid in the defence of the city. When the Republicans arrived in the neighbourhood of Geneva, they found the gates closed, the succours arrived, and received a notification from the Senate of Berne that they would defend it to the last extremity. The defenceless state of the frontier towns in the Jura, between France and Switzerland, rendered it highly imprudent to engage in an immediate contest with these warlike mountaineers. In these circumstances negotiation seemed preferable to open violence, and, after a short time, the French retired from the neighbourhood of Geneva, and General Montesquieu ventured openly to disobey the rash commands of the Convention, who had ordered him to undertake the siege of that city. Two successive conventions were agreed to, in virtue of which the Swiss withdrew their forces from the town, and the French their troops from its vicinity. Geneva was rescued for the moment from the peril of Republican invasion, and Montesquieu had the glory of saving his country from the consequences of the rash and unjustifiable aggression which they had commenced.[1]

[1] Ann. Reg. 1793, 75. Jom. ii. 311, 312, 313. Th. iii. 191. Oct. 22, & Nov. 2.

Measures to revolutionize Savoy.

The Convention lost no time in consolidating their conquests, and making them the foundation of farther revolutionary measures. A Jacobin club of 1200 members was formed at Chambery, with affiliated societies through all Savoy, which soon spread the fever of democracy through the whole Maritime Alps, and threatened the institutions of Piedmont with total overthrow. A National Convention, established at Chambery on 21st October, proclaimed the abolition of royalty, tithes, and the privileged orders; and deputations from all the clubs in Savoy were sent to Paris, and received in the most enthusiastic

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manner by the French legislature. At length, on the 27th November, the whole of Savoy was incorporated with France, under the name of the Department of Mont Blanc; and shortly after, the district of Nice was swallowed up in the encroaching Republic, under the title of the Department of the Maritime Alps, and the state of Monaco added to its extensive dominions.[1]

Nov. 27.

Dec. 7.

[1] Ann. Reg. 1793, 134, 135, 140.

Operations on the Upper Rhine.

Amidst these general triumphs of the Republican cause, fortune deserted their standards on the Upper Rhine. The French forces in that quarter, which amounted, including the armies of Kellerman, Custine, and Biron, to sixty thousand men, might have struck an important blow against the Duke of Brunswick's army, now severely weakened by the departure of the Austrians under Clairfait, for the defence of the Low Countries. But the movements of these generals, not sufficiently combined with each other, led to nothing but disaster. The plan adopted was for Bournonville, who had succeeded Kellerman, to take possession of Treves and move upon Coblentz, where he was to effect a junction with Custine, and, with their united forces, press upon the Allies, already threatened by the army of Flanders, and compel them to recross the Rhine. This plan was ably conceived, but its execution entirely failed, owing partly to the difficulty of the enterprise in the beginning of winter, and partly to the want of cordial co-operation among the generals who conducted it.*

[2] Toul. iii. 105, 106. Jom. ii. 269, 272, 273.

General Laroboliere, who was intrusted with the advanced guard of Bournonville's army, amounting to 3000 men, destined to attack the city of Treves, was recalled when his journey was half-completed, by the apprehensions of his commander-in-chief; while Custine, whose force, by the deduction of the

Nov. 15.

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garrison of Mayence, was reduced to 15,000 men, seemed more intent upon pillaging the palaces which fell in his way, and establishing Jacobin clubs in Frankfort and Mayence, than on prosecuting the military movements of the campaign. Mean while, the Prussians, observing the inactivity of the army of Kellerman, secretly drew their forces round Custine's corps, in the hope that, unsupported as it was, and far in advance, it might be made prisoners before any effectual succour could be detached to its support. The design, owing to the supineness of the commander of the French forces, had very nearly succeeded. For long Custine disregarded the Prussian corps, which were gradually drawing round him, and was only awakened from his dream of security upon finding his sole remaining line of retreat threatened by the enemy. He then detached General Houchard with three thousand men, who had an unsuccessful action with the Prussians near Limbourg; but shortly after, the arrival of twelve thousand men from the army of the Upper Rhine put him in a condition to resume offensive operations.[1]

Nov. 9.

Nov. 13.

[1] Jom. ii. 275, 278, 280. St Cyr, i. 9-12. Toul. iii. 108.

Mean while the King of Prussia, finding himself at the head of a noble force of fifty thousand men, now in some measure recovered from their disasters, resolved to anticipate the enemy, and drive them from the right bank of the Rhine, in order to give his troops secure cantonments for the winter. With this view he put his army in motion, and directing the bulk of his forces against Custine's right flank, obliged him to retire to an intrenched camp behind the Nidda, leaving a garrison of 2000 men in Frankfort, in a most precarious situation. The King immediately attempted a *coup de main* against that city, which completely succeeded,

Dec. 2. French recross the Rhine.

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the whole garrison, with the exception of 200 men, being either killed or made prisoners. Custine, upon this disaster, after making a feeble attempt to defend the course of the Nidda, repassed the Rhine, and cantoned his troops between Bingen and Frankendal, leaving a garrison of ten thousand men to defend the important fortress of Mayence. On their side, the Allies also put their troops into winter quarters, of which they stood so much in need, the line of their cantonments extending through Frankfort and Darmstadt, with an advanced guard to observe that frontier city.[1]

[1] Jom. ii. 282, 292. Toul. iii. 116, 117. St Cyr, 11, 12, 16. Hard. ii. 77, 98.

Thus terminated the campaign of 1792, a period fraught with the most valuable instruction to the statesman and the soldier. Already the desperate and energetic character of the war was made manifest; the contagion of republican principles had gained for France many conquests, but the severity of republican rule had rendered the delusion, in the countries which they had overrun, as short-lived as it was fallacious. In many places their armies had been welcomed, upon their arrival, as deliverers; in none had they been regretted, on their departure, as friends. The campaign, which opened under such untoward auspices, had been marked by the most splendid successes on the part of the Republicans; but it was evident that their conquests had exceeded their strength, and it was remarked that at its close their affairs were declining in every quarter.[2] In the north, the army of Dumourier, which had just completed the conquest of Flanders, had fallen into the most disorderly state; whole battalions had left their colours, and returned home, or spread themselves in bands of robbers over the conquered territory; the horses and equipments were in wretched condition,

[2] Jom. ii. 192.

and the whole army, weakened by license and insubordination, fast tending to decay. The armies of Bournonville and Custine, paralysed by the division and inactivity of their chiefs, were in little better circumstances, and their recent failures had gone far to weaken the energetic spirit which their early successes had produced; while the troops who had overrun Savoy and Nice, a prey to their own disorders, were suffering under the consequences of the plunder and devastation which had inflicted such misery on the conquered districts.[1]

[1] Jom. ii. 292, 317. Dum. iii. 230.

But it was evident, from the events which had occurred, that the war was to exceed, in magnitude and importance, any which had preceded it, and that consequences, beyond all example momentous, were to follow its continuance. The campaign had only commenced in the beginning of August, and before the close of the year, an invasion, the most formidable which had ever threatened the existence of France, had been baffled, and conquests greater than any achieved by its preceding monarchs obtained. Flanders, the theatre of such obstinate contests in the reign of Louis XIV., had been overrun in little more than a fortnight; the Transalpine dominions of the house of Savoy severed from the Sardinian crown, and the great frontier city of Germany wrested from the empire, almost under the eyes of the Imperial and Royal armies. All this had been accomplished, too, under the greatest possible apparent disadvantages; the French armies had taken the field in a state of complete insubordination; disgrace and discomfiture had attended their first efforts; the kingdom was torn by intestine faction; a large portion of its nobility in the ranks of the invaders; and few of its generals had seen any service, or were in a condition to oppose the experienced tactics of the enemy.

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But to these apparently overwhelming disadvantages, the French had to oppose elements hitherto unknown in modern warfare, the energy of republican valour, and the vigour of democratic ambition. Experience soon demonstrated that these principles were more powerful than any which had yet been brought into action in human affairs, and that the strength they conferred would be equalled only by the developement of passions as strong, and feelings as universal. The French triumphed as long as they contended with kings and armies; they fell, when their tyranny had excited the indignation, and their invasions roused the patriotism of the people.

But it was not *immediately* that this formidable power arose; and political lessons of the utmost moment, for the future guidance of mankind, may be gathered from the commencement of this memorable war.

1. The first conclusion which presents itself is the absolute necessity, in attacking a country in a state of revolution, of proceeding vigorously in the outset, and not suffering early success to convert democratic energy into military ambition. These two principles are nearly allied; the one rapidly passes into the other; but at first they are totally distinct. After a little success in war, a revolutionary state is the most formidable of all antagonists; before that has been obtained, it generally may, without much difficulty, be vanquished. No armies could be in a worse state than those of France at the commencement of the campaign of 1792, and the reason was, that the license of a Revolution had dissolved the band of discipline; none could be more formidable than they were at Arcola, because success had then turned political fervour into the career of con-

quest. In attacking a revolutionary state, the only wise and really economical course is to put forth a powerful force at the outset, and never permit a transient success to elevate the spirits of the people. Bitterly did the Austrian and Prussian Governments regret the niggardly display of their strength at the commencement of the war. They could easily have then put forward a hundred thousand men for the invasion of Champagne, while sixty thousand advanced through Alsace, and as many from the Low Countries. Two military monarchies, wielding a united force of above four hundred thousand men, could assuredly have made such an effort for a single campaign.[1] What a multitude of evils would such an early exertion have saved; the French Conscription, the campaign of Moscow, the rout of Leipsic, the blood of millions, the treasures of ages!

[1] Jom. i. 375, 386.

2. Had the Allies duly improved their advantages at the outset, the Revolution might unquestionably have been vanquished in the first campaign. A little less delay in the advance to the Argonne forest, would have prevented the French from occupying, with their inexperienced force, its broken defiles, and compelled them to yield up the capital, or fight in the plains of Champagne, where the numerous cavalry of the Prussians would have proved irresistible; a little more vigour in pressing on the retreating column from Grandpré to St Ménéhould, would have dispersed the whole defending army, and converted the passion for freedom into that of terror. Fifteen hundred Prussian hussars there routed ten thousand of the best troops of France; the fate of Europe then hung on a thread; had the Duke of Brunswick fallen on the retiring army with

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a considerable force, it would have all dissolved, and the reign of the Revolution was at an end.

3. The occupation of the defiles of the Argonne forest by Dumourier, has been the subject of the highest panegyric from military writers; but it brought France to the brink of ruin, by the peril to which his army was exposed in the subsequent retreat to St Ménéhould. A very competent authority, Marshal St Cyr, has censured it as a perilous and useless measure, which, by dividing the French force in front of a superior enemy, exposed them to the risk of being beaten, and cut to pieces in detail.[1] In truth, the inability of Dumourier to defend the passes of that forest, adds one to the numerous instances on record, of the impossibility of defending a range of broken ground, however strong, against a superior and enterprising enemy. The reason is, that the defending force is necessarily divided to guard the different passes, whereas, the attacking may select their point of assault, and by bringing overwhelming numbers there, compel the abandonment of the whole line. This is just what Napoleon did in the Maritime Alps, Soult in the Pyrenees, and Diebitch in the Balkan. The only example of the successful maintenance of such a position is that of Wellington at Torres Vedras, and that was not the defence of a range of mountains, so much as a great intrenched camp, adequately defended by field works at all points. Unquestionably, by keeping his forces together, Dumourier would never have exposed them to the imminent hazard which occurred in the retreat of his detached columns from Grandpré to the camp in the rear, a movement which, if executed in presence of an enterprising enemy, would have proved fatal to

[1] St Cyr's Mem. i. 64, *et seq.*

France. Had Napoleon been in the Duke of Brunswick's place with so superior a force, he would speedily have penetrated through the other defiles of the Argonne forest, and compelled Dumourier to lay down his arms in his impregnable camp.

4. The wretched condition and inglorious exploits of the French armies at the commencement of the war, is a striking proof of the extreme peril to national independence, which arises from soldiers taking any part in civil dissensions, and forgetting for the transient applause of the multitude, the obedience and fidelity, which are the first of military virtues. The revolt of the French Guards, the vacillation of the army under Louis XVI., placed the national independence on the brink of ruin. The insubordination, the tumults, the indiscipline, consequent on such a revolt, dry up the sources of military prowess: till they are removed, the nation has no protection against its enemies. Let not future ages calculate upon again meeting with the genius of Dumourier, or the timidity of the Duke of Brunswick: had matters been reversed, had the French commander headed the invaders, and the Prussian been intrusted with the defence, where would now have been the name or the independence of France? Internal despotism, and foreign subjugation, are the inevitable consequences of such breaches of military discipline. France tasted the bitterness of both, in consequence of the applauded revolt of her defenders; the Reign of Terror, the despotism of Napoleon, the capture of Paris, were its legitimate consequences. The French army preserved its honour unsullied, and maintained the virgin purity of the capital through all the perils of the monarchy: it lost both amidst the anarchy which followed the desertion of its duty on the rise of the Republic.

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Lastly, from the glorious result of the generous efforts which the French people made to maintain their independence, after revolt had paralysed their regular defenders, the patriots of succeeding times may derive materials for encouragement even in the severest extremities of adverse fortune. No situation could well appear more desperate than that of France, after the fall of Longwy; with an insurgent capital, and a disunited people; pierced to the heart by an invading army, and destitute alike of experienced commanders and disciplined soldiers. Yet, from all these dangers was France delivered by the energy of its government, and the heroism of its inhabitants. From the extremity of peril at Grandpré, how rapid was the transition to security and triumph; to glories greater than those of Francis I.; to conquests more rapid than those of Louis XIV.—a striking example to succeeding ages of what can be effected by energy and patriotism; and of the rewards which await those who, disregarding the frowns of fortune, steadily adhere through all its vicissitudes to the discharge of duty.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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